

TESTAMENT TO DEMOCRACY

*Author of :*

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STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERY AND ITS HISTORY  
THE ROAD TO FREEDOM  
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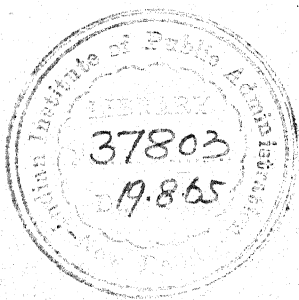
# TESTAMENT TO DEMOCRACY

By  
LORD WEDGWOOD

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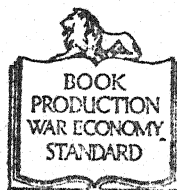
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## INTRODUCTION

'DEBUNKING' the 19th century has become the preoccupation of the 20th. Victorian complacency incites George Bernard Shaw to insert pins; Victorian virtues become a subject for mirth; and a crescendo of abuse descends upon Parliament. Historians, novelists and playwrights conspire to expose the seamy side, the painful past, and futile future of democracy. The Fourth Estate finds profit in laceration of the Third. Fascism and the Corporative State direct the fashionable whirlwind, and fancy they can guide the storm into a planned world. *Aut Caesar, aut nihil*, leaves freedom without defenders.

It is usual for those engaged in any profession to defend that profession against the world. Only the profession of politics lacks defenders. We are amateurs; we have no Trade Union; fees are bad form. Our mistress is too private to parade before the crowd. Moreover, most politicians are disappointed sooner or later, and rush, on release, to expose the blemishes of that relentless mistress who drew them on to failure. The prizes are glittering but few and uncertain. In politics we can call no man happy till he dies.

Possibly I am disappointed like the rest—probably not, as I have achieved an hereditary seat on the scarlet benches. However, an hereditary sense of duty compels me, in any case, to fight fascism by setting forth the charms and virtues of democracy—or at least of that variety of democracy which is now in question—British Parliamentary Government. With the exception of Mr. Churchill, no one has better qualifications to defend the lady; and I drag in the Prime Minister to substantiate my claim.<sup>1</sup>

For more than 60 years I have been soaked in politics. I have seen it all from outside and inside, with the eyes of both servant and master, local and central, from both Houses of Parliament. In many countries I have seen other Parliaments at work; in most I have known intimately those who worked the grand machine of democratic rule. My constituency has constantly re-elected me, whatever my Party label, for 36 years—for the last 13 without a contest and unanimously. To have been so trusted is a great responsibility. I should be ashamed to go down to the great House of Kings without setting out the reasons for my faith in democracy, signed, sealed and delivered as a Testament.

By democracy I mean government by reason and persuasion, the antithesis of fascism, which is government by force. The instruction of the legacy should be: "Respect your Parliament, and see that your politicians are such that you can respect them. If you have not got a Parliament, get one, and remember that it will be what you make it." So I seek to show why the best men in Britain have always wanted to get into Parliament; that actual work in Parliament becomes largely altruistic; that the career of ruler can be both honourable and interesting. I hope to show the pre-eminent advantages of

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of a Fighting Life*. Hutchinson, 1940.

the British Constitution over others: to show its disadvantages; the dangers from fascist attack to which it is open; the curse of Party, destroying independence; the growth of bureaucratic rule, and the methods of controlling bureaucrats.

Reconstruction after the war, or a construction of a new world, accentuate all the present problems of rule. The middle way for democracy, between the Scylla and Charybdis of anarchy and fascism—liberty and authority—has to be prospected with especial care.

*Truth*, which bears me little affection, charges me with arrogance and intolerance. Toleration, in these later days, approximates to cowardice; and I hope I may die still utterly intolerant of cruelty, injustice and error. I accept also mental arrogance, and justify on my record. Yet any discussion on government by reason must submit to reason. Therefore occasional debatable points are controverted in footnotes in the manner of Mr. H. G. Wells. These footnotes are by Mr. J. F. Price, best informed on Russia, and by my son, whose resolution and vision are conspicuous.

To Sir Gilbert Campion, Clerk of the House of Commons; to Mr. F. W. Metcalfe, Clerk at the Table; to Mr. P. D. Proctor of the Treasury; and especially to Mr. T. G. B. Cocks of the Committee Office, I owe much kindness, encouragement and elimination of error. They would, however, be unwilling to be associated with deductions, commentary, or any aspirations going beyond the perpetuation of the perfect Parliament.

Lastly, as a salute to my latest peers, I discuss the practice and possible utility of the House of Lords as at present constituted and empowered. In such manner, drawing from my own experience, I state the immortal case for freedom and democracy.

In that spirit I bequeath my sword to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage—and my courage and skill to him that can get it.

WEDGWOOD OF BARLASTON.

4th July 1942.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE GOAL IS SELF-GOVERNMENT

*"To educate the wise man, the State exists ; and, with the appearance of the wise man, the State expires."*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON, 1844.

It is my settled conviction that British parliamentary government is better than any other method of government, better than any other variety of democracy, and better now than it ever was in the past.

At the same time it has never been more bitterly attacked, not only abroad but at home. It is assailed by fascists from the right, by communists and even by socialists from the left ; from the right as dangerous ; from the left as cumbersome. Yet, inasmuch as this war is one of conflicting principles, it is being waged for or against parliamentary government.

Whereas fifty years ago our form of government had spread and was developing throughout the whole civilized world, it is now beaten back—out of Asia, out of South America, out of Europe—back to its original home at Westminster. If one listens to talk in our clubs, or messes, or common rooms, one may indeed fear lest 'our finest hour' should be also our last. Democracy is no longer sacrosanct ; it must stand on its own merits—on reason.

#### BRITISH DEMOCRACY IS THE BEST

When I allege that our democracy is better than any other method of government, many will agree that democratic rule is better than theocratic rule, or aristocratic rule, or autocratic rule. But, better than any other form of democracy ! The shades of Alexander Hamilton and (some of) the fathers of the Constitution will rise in protest. Better than ever in the past ! Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone will join Mr. Disraeli in acid comment.

Let me therefore define what I mean by 'better'. I do not wish to prove that Parliament is most efficient in war or in peace ; that it truly represents the people (for I often hope that it does not) ; that it has created the powerful British Empire by intelligent planning, and that by more intelligent planning and drilling it can produce that after-the-war reconstruction of the universe of which we dream. Oh no ! On those lines I have no wish to contest supremacy with Hitler.

The principle was laid down by William Godwin : "Society is produced by our wants, and Government by our wickedness. Society is in every state a blessing ; government, even in its best state, but a necessary evil."

So I am going to judge degrees of excellence in government by how far government enables the governed to do without them, enables the subject to become a master, a self-respecting citizen ; the mob to acquire judgment and conscience ; the selfish to respect the rights of others ; the animal to become divine ; the wise man to emerge who shall need no coercion to deal honestly, humanely and justly by his fellows. Do we approach the Golden Rule ?

## THE HARD TEST

It is a hard test, one which I expect no leader to achieve except in theory. I only recall those in authority to fundamentals, and ask : "How far have leaders of State or Church made themselves unnecessary ? How far have they developed in those they lead, self-respect, character, self-control, self-sacrifice and obedience to reason and conscience ? How far do they *wish* to abdicate because those they led have become, in the words of St. Peter, 'as free as the servants of God' ?"

"An impossibly high test !" "No relation to practical politics !" "If that is what he means by 'better' we may be permitted to prefer Mussolini and the Pontine marshes." Scorn descends upon my head, and leaves me unbowed. For, as a theory, most Englishmen and all Scotsmen who read that last paragraph will exclaim with satisfaction and acclaim the philosopher.

It is an acid test. Put the question to the bishops of the Church of England—not the raw suffragan from Mirfield, but to one who has long had responsibility for State and Church from a seat in our Parliament. Ask him : "Is your work to teach your flock to do without you ; to stand upright alone ; to judge wisely for themselves ; to acquire character and a conscience fit to be followed at any sacrifice ? Or do you teach and believe that human nature is permanently depraved, and see in that good ground for the permanent dependence of man upon the priest, for perpetual external guidance ?"

You must decide between the two doctrines. You cannot have it both ways. The swaddling-clothes, controlling man's mind and action, must be unwound—or retained. You may question the speed, but not the goal. Faced with that test, most of the leaders of the Church of England, all of the Church of Scotland, all Non-conformist divines, would see the truth and pass the test. But no Pope and no bishop of the Greek or Catholic Churches could possibly agree to the unwinding of those swaddling-clothes from round the conscience and mind of the individual. They alone know the way ; they alone can show the way ; they are for ever indispensable.

I bring the Church into the question, firstly, because religious leaders are, perhaps, more honest and certainly more philosophic than statesmen, who are continually harried by the immediate issues of expediency. The Churches have thought this out long ago, though the point ever needs re-statement. Mankind is still so far from perfect that the Church's vested interest in man's need for moral guidance is hardly threatened. Belief in the perfectibility of human nature, in the conversion to the image of God, is orthodox christianity. They can accept the idea that man may develop through the ages from the animal to the divine. They wish for that consummation ; they can work for it ; they can think how best to help it forward.

So I drag an unwilling Church into politics that they may face that same problem which should face the statesman : how best to help forward the virtue and conscience and character of the governed. Do you make people good by control, by laws and regulations, by police and coercion ? Or is a better result obtained by precept, example, reason and freedom ? The child tumbles, but walks, as we unwind the swaddling-clothes ; the man must be unbound and have a chance to fall—even to choose wrong, if he is ever to learn to choose right. In that one sentence lies all the case I would make for freedom—for our form of democracy by reason, by trial and by error.



## AUTHORITY IS THE ALTERNATIVE

My second reason for questioning Church before State is that both the issue and the dividing line are so clear-cut. The Church of England may hesitate; the Church of Rome cannot: liberty and authority are clearly at variance. The libertarian school seeks to develop the individual conscience by appealing to reason and by trusting the individual; the authoritarian school distrusts fallible man and appeals to an inspired faith, buttressed by law.

This clear cleavage is not so evident, but exists as fundamentally, in politics as in religion, in State as in Church. The authoritarian, whether crypto-fascist or doctrinaire socialist, does not accept the perfectibility of human nature; or the virtues of reason and freedom; or, in fine, the supreme merits of British parliamentary democracy. He calls ever for coercive action, not for debate; for obedience, not for thought. Marx and Mosley, Pollitt and 'Colonel Blimp', are at one with an infallible Pope or an efficient dictator.

The faithful Roman Catholic says that in matters of religion he owes allegiance to Rome, but in matters of state his allegiance is to the governors of that land in which he lives. I do not think it is possible to distinguish between such twin allegiances. It is the same question that assails him over Church and State. *Quo vadis?* Are you leading towards universal obedience or towards the risks and illumination of freedom?

If I stress the illuminating or educational functions of British parliamentary rule, heaven forbid that I should be supposed to approve of our established system of providing 'wisdom' for working-class children. There, authoritarians enthroned, teach *what* to think; and canalize approved 'wisdom' in the guise of information. So far as instruction goes beyond reading, writing and arithmetic, they seek to provide the manual and mental dexterity of the 'really useful citizen'. They would be puzzled, as by a paradox, were you to suggest that the most 'useful citizen' should not accept their authority, but be a rebel against authority.<sup>1</sup>

It is precisely that illumination and education—that drawing out of the reasoning powers of adult man—which has been the outcome of 700 years of parliamentary growth and experience. Debate and struggle, trial and error, rebellion and revolt (in matters small and great)—these are the perpetually renewed lessons which have created the thinking machine of British democracy.

## DEMOCRACY IS GOVERNMENT BY REASON

Democracy is not government by counting heads, but government by debate and explanation. Reasons must be given for everything, not for fear of an adverse vote, but to preserve the reputation of the Minister for sound sense and clear judgment. The front Government bench is a body of thin-

<sup>1</sup> In 1938 I sponsored a strike of school-children in one of my constituency mining villages. A rearrangement of schools had involved some 100 children in a one-and-a-half mile walk to school along a dangerous road, and they could not get home for the mid-day meal. It ended, as everything British always does, in a compromise; but the shocked horror of the County Education Authority at finding an M.P. and Privy Councillor abetting illegality was very good for the Authority and for the children. I had to explain that the children lost three months' normal training, but acquired more valuable education. They would never forget that lesson. The bureaucracy should not count on too much docility; nor forget that it is they who are the servants.

skinned normal men, competing with each other for the good opinion of the House. Tell a Minister: "Of course I do not agree with you; but you made out a good case," and he is transported to the seventh heaven. Tell him: "You made out a rotten case; I could have done better myself," and he goes back to his office, conscious of failure, to curse his officials for not anticipating the adverse arguments.

This is government by debate, and it has been going on continuously in England day after day for 400 years. Not one issue in ten ever goes to a vote; and, if it is voted on, that is of little importance compared with the effect of the debate—on the House, on the Press, on the country, and on the Minister's reputation. On May 8, 1940, Mr. Chamberlain got his vote<sup>1</sup>; he got his majority; but the debate, and his contribution to it, drove him from the House a beaten man.

#### PRESS AND PUBLIC REQUIRE REASON

Debate is no longer confined to Parliament. For two hundred years the Press has been taking part—with one eye on their proprietors and the other on the best 'case' for their readers. And now the public have joined in too! Formerly the best chance for them used to be at election times, particularly at by-elections; but now the protesting elector fills the letter-box of his M.P., often with copies of what he has written to Mr. Churchill. Good! That is all government by debate; it all demands a good case, circumspection and caution on the part of the Executive. Or the Executive might be incited to action, even to open a second front! Moreover, all taking a hand, acquire a sense of responsibility for their government.

There are always common-form letters, organized by the various associations—*e.g.*, for or against the drink trade. Postcarding your M.P. was and is the normal method employed by the vested interests. But when I entered Parliament other letters from constituents were rare; those from an unknown public were even rarer. Such as there were concerned personal affairs mainly—appointments of Justices of the Peace, government contracts, or accident compensation. The growth of state concern for (or interference with) the lives of individual citizens—protective tariffs, pensions, insurance, war, etc.—have immensely increased the letters from constituents and the work of the M.P. But in addition thereto we now get an ever-increasing fan mail, dealing with general matters of administration. This is the growth of the last ten years. Every reported speech, every broadcast, every article in the Press, brings in a shoal of letters—advice, encomiums, or abuse. All are taking a hand in the perpetual debate—over China, Abyssinia, Spain, Fascism, or religion—and all influence the recipient. While he may deplore the anonymous threats of immediate or future 'liquidation', he cannot but be inspired to increased activity by the just admiration of those who so eloquently recognize his wisdom!

#### ALL SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

It would appear indeed that most of the inhabitants of England now feel that they share with the Government the responsibility for governing the world. For this wholly desirable growth of individual responsibility we have to thank not only Parliament, but the Press and the Gallup polls.

<sup>1</sup> Actually, on the question that the House do now adjourn, the voting was 281 to 200.

All these elements are included in what we may call the parliamentary method of government by reason and debate. All are essentially educational instead of coercive. All involve the effort of thinking *for* ourselves, and not only *of* ourselves. They widen the mind, broaden the sympathies, develop the conscience. The fascist slogan, "Britons, mind your own business", makes a diminishing appeal; not because 'our business' seems to have pretty wide contacts, but because an increasing number feel a sense of responsibility for Indians, Jews, Africans, and Poles, as well as for those once poorer fellow-citizens with whom this war has brought us all into closer contact.

This widening sympathy and sense of responsibility, sponsored by parliamentary government, is still, I fear, to be found only in Great Britain. It is not to be found to a comparable extent in any Dominion, not even in America, nor in any of the old European or Asiatic lands. That it is peculiar to Great Britain is largely due to our age-long system of parliamentary government.

#### BLACK PAGES, AND THE NON-CONFORMIST CONSCIENCE

The various revolts of the free religions have also played a part in the formation of what came to be called scornfully 'the Non-conformist conscience'. It has led to the charge of hypocrisy against the whole British race, because the conscience of the few has not often been in a position to convert the minds or restrain the acts of the many. But it is just as well that there should always have been at least the few to protest in Parliament and, however slowly, to convert the majority to a like sense of responsibility.

There have been plenty of black pages in our history. Let us admit it! Black pages stand in our history as in the history of all other countries and religions. But there is this difference between us and the other criminals. While the bad deeds were actually being done, there were found Englishmen who dared to protest in public in Parliament, to denounce the guilty Government of their own country, to correct, and finally to convert. Where else has that been done? Where else would it have been tolerated? Elsewhere, only the silence of indifference or fear!

#### THE GROWTH OF CONSCIENCE

I propose to trace the growth, in or through Parliament, of this sense of responsibility, this widening sympathy which grew into a public conscience, and now constitutes the chief and most unique glory of our version of democratic rule.

This growth of reasoned responsibility—or of conscience in administration—which has been so marked a feature in British public life for the last 170 years, began with Lord Mansfield's assurance of freedom for the slave who touched British soil,<sup>1</sup> with the opposition to the war against the American colonies, with Howard's prison reforms, with Wilberforce and Clarkson denouncing the slave trade.

From Peterloo (1819) onwards, it coloured and transformed all our ideas of duty to and responsibility for the poor; from 1848 conscience took on responsibility for the oppressed of Europe—Italians, Poles, Magyars, Russians and Jews. The doctrine of trusteeship for coloured peoples under our rule was linked more closely in its early stages with missionary enterprise than with Parliament or the Press. The settlement of Freetown in

<sup>1</sup> In 1777: "Let the negro be discharged", *Forever Freedom*, p. 99.

Sierra Leone, 1786, and the quarrel with the Boer farmers ending in the Great Trek, 1836, were essentially the result of missionaries working on the social conscience of the governing class. So potent was the hold of evangelical religion on the Victorian British, that Parliament, when forced to take sides between the man on the spot and the natives, often actually followed conscience as reflected by the missionaries, and always proposed to do so.

The Constitution for Cape Colony in 1853 gave the first votes to coloured people, soon to be followed in the West Indies and New Zealand. Probably the clearest evidence of this conscience, which we are now told to despise, flashed out in the violent agitation over Governor Eyre's hangings in Jamaica in 1865. Mill and the humanitarians faced Carlyle and the authoritarians across a gulf which divided the whole nation. 'Liberty' and 'Hero-worship' were in just such antithesis as are democracy and fascism today. It is doubtful whether our ignorant Nazis prefer even their conception of an illiberal, tyrannical Oliver Cromwell to their Saint Thomas Carlyle, the hero-worshipper.

It is not necessary—nor possibly desirable—to pursue here the modern policy of the Colonial Office, or the Irish Office, or the India Office. It suffices for my argument that consciousness of responsibility rather than self-interest has throughout divided this nation in perpetual debate. We may have become less religious-minded, but we have become more convinced that the chief merit of rulers is to fit subjects to rule themselves, and with some reluctance, but with more self-esteem, to get out of the saddle.

Every extension of the franchise in our own land—in 1832, 1868, 1885, 1918; every extension of local government—in 1834, 1867, 1888, 1893, has been a surrender of the reins, developing self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect, giving to those previously under orders, the power to govern themselves. Just so the greatest of Indian philosophers advocates in double-harness *satyagraha* (self-control) and *swaraj* (home rule).

Every step is fraught with danger, but only by falling can man learn to stand. A little learning is no doubt a dangerous thing; but wisdom can only be attained by dangerous trial, by painful education in the world of men. This education the people of Britain have endured and still endure, and propose to continue until they are hardened and wise enough to be free.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE WISH TO SIT IN PARLIAMENT

*"For those who see Truth and would follow her; for those who recognize Justice and would stand for her, success is not the only thing. Success! Why, Falsehood has often that to give; and Injustice has often that to give. Must not Truth and Justice have something to give that is their own by proper right—theirs in essence not by accident."*

HENRY GEORGE, 1879.

THIS 19th century development among the English of a sense of responsibility for others, bringing in its train conscience, cannot but astonish the student. For these were the years of the great expansion of the British Empire, and Empire builders are not usually conspicuous for conscience.

In truth this unnatural development was due to a comparatively limited

number of prosperous business men, born of the puritan reformation and addicted to religious introspection. Such were my own forebears, and the great Quaker families, Pease, Fry, Buxton, Fox, Bright, etc.; the evangelicals, Wilberforce, Ashley and Hobhouse. They lived a life of their own, cut off from the squirearchy as well as from the illiterates, relying ever on their own judgment, of immense charity and compassion.

Their influence and example inoculated strata below and above them in the social scale. There are few finer examples of altruism among the workers than the resolute support given by the 'clemming' cotton-operatives of Lancashire to the Union Government in the Civil War, and that was clearly due to the inspiration of John Bright. Still today every experienced British politician honours the potency of an appeal to the altruism, or 'better nature', of the British working-man—he who first saw the light through the clear chapel windows.

Even before the Reform Bill of 1832 this admirable intelligentia began to sweep into Parliament, and to influence those ruling political circles to which their humanitarian and religious doctrines had hitherto been strange. With Parliament as a sounding-board, they aroused the morality or conscience of Victorian England. They captured the Press; they converted the Church; they created a public opinion such as is not always found even in America; an immensely stabilizing influence in a rocking world.

#### THE BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS LAW

Professor Dicey discussed the influence of law upon public opinion. Which creates which, may be debated for ever; but that conscience created the public opinion of the lawmakers of Victorian Britain is certain. They put individual conscience above law, and I am well content to think that the British are now the champion breakers both of law and of public opinion. The Lord Chief Justice adjures me: "How dare you say that I put my law above my conscience!" The High Church Whig, Lord Hugh Cecil, speaking in the Commons, defines the boundaries for Christians: "Acts of Parliament do not make things right or wrong." The suffragettes, like Mr. Gandhi, gloried in gaol; while to have defied the police is almost a *sine qua non* for a labour leader. In Parliament, because we see how laws are made and how soon most of them die, we treat them with perhaps excessive levity. In America I believe they regard every new law as the Act of the People and therefore the Act of God! Here, the ordinary citizen's reaction to a new law is indignation against the impertinent interference of Government and the pusillanimity of Parliament in allowing it.

In short, it is Parliament as the sounding-board, not Parliament as a law factory, that makes public opinion—shapes opinion, not only for the schools and for the Press, but for the Church and for the philosopher. All the tossing elements go into a thinking-vat, are there blunged and blended; and in that mixture ferments the political education; from it pours forth the understood responsibility of self-control and liberty. For this blending and fermenting the British Parliament stands unrivalled.

#### WHY THERE IS COMPETITION TO BE M.P.

Long before Henry VIII found out that Parliament could be usefully employed, and wrapped it round His Majesty as a shield or as a stalking-horse, getting to Parliament had become the ambition of every Englishman.

It involved going to Court, with all that meant of advancement, adventure and influence.

The first elected House of Commons met in rebellion in January 1265; the first for which we have any names of those elected met in 1275. From 1295 we have enough names of M.P.s, easily identified, to prove my statement in the preceding paragraph. For instance, the squirearchy, not content with the limited number of county seats,<sup>1</sup> competed for the borough representation, offering to serve without pay. So did the budding lawyer; so did the Royal servants. Collectors of Customs, Escheators, Recorders, and Mayors, merchants and pirates (sea-captains), all competed for the pleasure and profit of a trip to town. As it was under Edward I or Henry VIII, so it still is today—not so risky, more burdensome, but as attractive. Still the ambition draws like a magnet, with the added reverberance of immemorial years.

The life into which we enter combines the mental gymnastics of college with the fresh wind of the outer world. There is no other Parliament like the English. For the ordinary man, elected to any senate from Lisbon to Lahore, there may be a certain satisfaction in being elected. The lucky man is to be at least among the rulers, the plaudits of supporters are in his ears, he has the envious admiration of his old associates, perhaps even nobler aspirations may be gratified. But the man who steps into the English Parliament takes his place in a procession which has been filing by since the birth of English history.

Men with long swords and short daggers were his predecessors, as they rode to Westminster over Dunsmore Heath, drinking ale in the taverns of Coventry and Towcester. Men with spiked shoes disputed loudly, in the terms they still use, about the insolence of York and the profusion of Warwick. In slashed breeches and ruffed collars they denounced the bishop of Rome and clamoured for the internment of all recusants. The country was 'going to the dogs' under Cromwell, just as it was under Gladstone, as men walked two and two into a Palace Yard that was 'New' in 1600, or called for torches at 'who goes home'.

Ordainers and Appellants, York or Lancaster, Protestant or Catholic, Court or Country, Roundhead or Cavalier, Whig or Tory, Liberal or Conservative, National or Labour—they all fit into that long pageant that no other country in the world can show. And they, one and all, pass on the same inextinguishable torch, burning brightly or flickering, to the next man in the race, while freedom and experience ever grow.

#### THE TITLE

It is little wonder that to write the letters M.P. after your name has become a decoration and a title valued beyond all others; and indeed it will lead to all others should the holder so desire. Because of this ambition and competition, from which no class is exempt, every diverse merit finds its way to Parliament and becomes accentuated. The greatest historians such as Gibbon and Macaulay; philosophers such as Sidney and Mill; the admirals of the north and south and west; Raleigh, Blake and Cromwell; the patriots Pym and Hampden; Marlborough, Rodney and Wellington; the greatest lawyers and the greatest wits; all sat where we sit, and create an atmosphere of considerable pride.

<sup>1</sup> Only 78, till the Palatinates of Cheshire and Durham and the Welsh counties were added, in the 16th century.



There one mixes on equal terms with all the powerful and famous, influencing each the other as reason or prejudice may decide. Unlike all similar institutions, we live all day in each other's pockets. Only the Ministers have private rooms, and the wise ones do not use them. Quite half the House do not have even unpaid private secretaries. The parties do not bunch together and scowl at the 'enemy', until, of course, we get into the Chamber under the public eye. It is a club, where all are equal; where all know each other by sight, sometimes by name—and occasionally wives' names also. I do not think I know any bores, so well are we trained to confine self-advertisement to the Chamber and our constituencies. There is but one unwritten rule: Never must you reveal on the public platform what was said in the smoking-room or across the dinner-table.

No dicing, no gaming, no cards, no billiard tables, and yet it is undoubtedly the most elect if not most select club in the world, where all are interested in and responsible for all the world. The cynic may say we are all bound together by a common bond—hostility to the Party Caucus in our constituencies. That bond is of course created by the constant insistence of these outsiders that they, and not our own brilliance, put us where we are, and might at any time regret it.

Inside the House, that bitterness of Party strife outside, to which we have to conform in public, strikes us as somewhat vulgar, almost bad form.

#### THE PRICE OF DECORATION

The price of entry to this select debating club—of using this excellent sounding-board—is undoubtedly high. It used to be £1000 down and £300 a year. Thanks to the advent of the Labour Party, to payment of Members, and, curiously enough, to that increase in the electorate which has made personal canvassing impossible, the cost is now much less. My contests (when I have any) now cost only £200 to £300; and the £600 a year given us for expenses more than covers the cost of lodging in town, while travelling to and from constituency is now free.

The cost today is the vastly increased work required by constituents. The M.P. has become a post-box for complaints against the bureaucracy. "Dear Jack", you write to the Minister, "What is the answer to this one?" And, in due course, "Dear Jack" replies, "Dear Jos" (in his own hand), followed by an official's answer making it quite clear that the Minister has devoted long hours to a special enquiry into the possibility of securing justice. This, sent on to the aggrieved elector, may, or may not, persuade him to vote for me again; but in any event, democracy is vindicated and bureaucracy compelled to state its case for the defence.

The cost of election is, however, a trifle compared with the humiliating difficulties in getting nominated for election. The youthful aspirant, fresh from a presidency of the Cambridge Union, suffused with desire to serve his country and save the world, encounters the Party Secretary. The Party Secretary has 200 hopeless seats to offer and talks heartily of 'winning his spurs'. Every four years he goes down to a fresh constituency with never a chance to win. Age creeps upon him, bitterness corrodes his youth, and he solaces his soul with the aphorism: He who is not a misanthrope at forty can never have loved mankind.

A local pull is certainly a great help. Because of my name, or family factory, I had a safe seat handed me on a plate; and, after 36 stormy years,

all contests have ceased, I have been judged innocuous, and have acquired the halo of immunity. Others, however, face over the tragedy of losing their seat; and, banished from elysium, try, too often in vain, to re-enter that world in which they delighted. The curse of political life is bitter disappointment. Few, even of those as lucky as myself, carry through to fruition the hopes or ambitions of their youth.

#### THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In connection with the *History of Parliament* I had to produce biographical notices of all M.P.s from 1265 to 1918. For this I wanted their minds rather than their deeds; and in the case of those still surviving in 1934, I made a bold attempt at political psycho-analysis, by questionnaire. It is true that there was a certain reluctance and even resentment at my questioning. Mr. MacDonald, then Prime Minister, replied that my questions were both inquisitive and impertinent. Whereupon I sent the horrid document to Philip Snowden, saying, "Ramsay says I am no gentleman, so I am sure you will answer the questions." He did, adding as a P.S.: "This is the only time in my life when I have agreed with Ramsay."

These were the questions, and most survivors answered all—except those relating to their income. If the reader should think them inquisitive, reflect what we would not now give to have had answers to such questions from those Parliament-men who sat under Elizabeth, Cromwell or Queen Anne!

- (1) In what year did you first know to which Party you belonged?
- (2) Who influenced your political thought, *i.e.* father, teacher, parson, etc.?
- (3) What books influenced your political views?
- (4) What were your religious convictions at 21?
- (5) What was your favourite newspaper when you first stood for Parliament?
- (6) Why did you want to be an M.P.?
- (7) Who advised you to stand at your first contest?
- (8) What was then your trade, profession, or occupation?
- (9) What was then your annual income, earned and unearned?
- (10) Had you had any experience of public work—if so, what?
- (11) How did you get the offer of the seat you first won?
- (12) What was then your chief political interest?
- (13) On what, in fact, did you specialize in Parliament?
- (14) What did your seat cost to contest; and how much yearly did it cost you?
- (15) Who, at the time you first became M.P., was your ideal—(a) living British Statesman, (b) dead Statesman of any land?
- (16) How did Parliament modify your views?
- (17) How did being an M.P. affect your earning capacity?
- (18) What did you enjoy most in Parliamentary life?
- (19) What did you dislike most, apart from facing re-election?
- (20) Which of your speeches do you think was your best?
- (21) What was the greatest speech you remember hearing?
- (22) Did speeches affect your vote—(a) in the House, (b) on Committee?
- (23) What was your best piece of work?
- (24) If you are no longer in Parliament, why did you leave?
- (25) What books have you written? And what books have been written about you?



Sometimes, to old friends, I accompanied the Questionnaire with a letter, such as : "There was a 26th question I had not the courage to ask. We all know at our age that we have not achieved the ambitions of our youth—all that we set out to do. So I wanted to ask also, 'Why did you fail?'—for each of us alone knows why." To which Lord Beaverbrook replied : "I hope that does not mean that you think you have failed. Your speeches have been an inspiration to thousands," which showed quite an unexpected kindly trait in that human dynamo. He *said* he had not failed, that he had created the three greatest newspapers in the world.

## AN ALTRUISTIC AMBITION

But what I would insist on emphasizing from all those replies, as well as from considerable experience, is the almost universal British desire to get into Parliament. That is the ambition which draws into a political career the pick of all classes, from the Cambridge undergraduate (such as William Allen in 1895 before attaining his majority), or the Trade Union organizer, to the successful man of business and the retired civil servant. For twenty years Ernest Bevin expressed unwillingness to come into the House—"more power outside Parliament", 'stick to my job'—and so on. One contest and a defeat at Gateshead had slaked ambition for a parliamentary career. All that went to the winds, when, at 55, he had his chance. Ambition to sit in Parliament never dies ; the University professor comes in at 60 or 70 years of age ; Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, General Sir Aylmer Hunter Weston, beribboned with countless honours, must get a seat. I remember Mosley in 1931 begging the Tory Chief Whip, Eyres Monsell, to let his 'New Party' have just two or three straight fights against Labour without a Conservative competitor—just two or three coupons ; and Monsell's passionate reply : "In the new Parliament there shall be neither a New Party nor a Mosley" ! Fascist though he is, it is my opinion that Mosley would 'scrap' his party and his past to get back to that Chamber in which he was so brilliant a performer, but which he professes to deride.

## OR A MEANS TO AN END

You do not get the same ambition or competition for seats in Congress at Washington. I understand that three quarters of the members of the House of Representatives are lawyers. Now, with lawyers a seat is less an end in itself than a means to an end. About one fifth of the House of Commons have at all times been lawyers ; they have been invaluable in our long parliamentary struggle, both because of their power to state a case, and for their wider and more liberal education, contrasting with that of the 'booby squires'. But it is clear that a seat in Parliament will help the career of a lawyer. There is always much for lawyers to get from Parliament. It is a means to a personal end. Those M.P.s of most value to democracy are those who seek no personal ends, those who have 'arrived', and can henceforth devote themselves to public work.

This, of course, is much too high a test for any legislature. Even the 'arrived' still have personal ends at which to aim ; but though we all have seen much of the seamy side of politics, I believe my colleagues would agree that there is less self-seeking in the British Parliament than in any other similar body ; certainly more unselfishness is expected of us.

## WHAT IS EXPECTED

All men and women tend to behave as others expect them to behave. This was never so obvious as during the blitz. Mainly because of public opinion, people in London did not like to show they were afraid. Because London had stood it so well, Coventry and Bristol must do so too. Because we were praised for it by the American Press, we even improved. I have often been under fire. Never under such circumstances have I not been afraid ; but I have always been more afraid of showing it. All our standards are set by what is expected of us ; and this is especially true of deceit and lying. Most Englishmen would rather be caught out in robbing the Government, or even a railway company, than in showing fear or telling a lie. The Members of any legislature have even a stronger reaction to public opinion. More is expected of them ; more limelight is thrown on them ; and they have a corporate responsibility to their body. The Officer caste must be brave ; the Church must be respectable ; the governing caste must be free from financial corruption—I wish I could say that they must also be independent in judgment and action. Directly the public lowers its expectations, standards will fall. Let public and Press bear this in mind when democracy is under fire.

We are not so foolish in England as to suppose that unselfishness can pervade Parliament. But we do expect that selfishness will take shape as ambition for a political career, and not the vulgar wish to make money through Parliament. There is the laudable ambition to write M.P. after one's name ; and there is thereafter, especially for the young, the ambition for success as an M.P. Such success may be registered by obtaining office ; or it may be reflected in the approval of the House of one's speeches and activities, constructive or destructive. Whatever the Party, the whole House is interested in its own men—charitable or approving. All resent importations to office of anyone from outside, 'not of the family', who has not learnt our parliamentary ways.

## ON EGOISM IN PARLIAMENT

The sheer egoist is, of course, a bore. He drops out, or is cured of recounting his own smartness and the stupidity of others. The House sizes such men up with remarkable rapidity ; the whole lot are insensibly drawn into behaving with good taste and without animosity. I speak of the ordinary life of the House, not of debate in the public Chamber or on Standing Committee.<sup>1</sup> Even there we tear to pieces arguments rather than characters, and I do not remember publicly comparing my opponents to either Ananias or Judas Iscariot.

Close behind the egoist comes the careerist. He is more tolerable. We recognize a sound and natural ambition in which we all share to a certain extent. But the greater your desire to climb up into the Cabinet, the more heart-breaking is the task. Console oneself as one may that 'kissing goes by favour' and not by merit, yet every time that a rival moves up makes others despair. Again and again, in this pathetic struggle, choice has to be made between the two perpetual alternatives : appeasing or terrifying the Chief

<sup>1</sup> Since 1832 the annual appointment of the ancient Grand Committees, for religion, for grievances, for courts of justice, and for trade, has been discontinued. They had long since fallen into disuse, and served only to mark the ample jurisdiction of the Commons in Parliament. The name Grand Committee is sometimes applied inaccurately to Standing Committees.

Whip; between docility and rebellion; between nodding and exploding. The choice is never easy, for the nodder may be forgotten both by the Chief Whip and by the Press; while the exploder may also get so easily the dread label of 'unpractical' or 'crank'. Politicians, however, live by advertisement in the Press; to be lampooned or abused is far better than to be forgotten.

When Charles Masterman and I were young, curly and radical, we always concluded our opposition on Standing Committee by asking the badgered Ministers to dine. Within four years Masterman got office. I did not, only because I was less interested in office than in the taxation of land values—hence 'crank'.

#### SUMMARY OF VIRTUES

The virtues of the House of Commons are therefore these. To belong to it is the ambition of practically all men; in effect, only clergymen of the Established Church and peers of the realm are excluded—both regrettable and accidental exclusions. Constant competition and perpetual education keep the best of all classes in Parliament. Public opinion and publicity ensure high standards. Constant debate in and out of the Chamber destroys prejudice and forces action to depend on reason. The immense variety and scope of the work provides agreeable occupation for all, in criticism, construction, and administration; each can select the career open to his talents; each is required for the good of his country. There is among nearly all an affectionate family feeling which provides consolation for failure and encouragement to sacrifice. Finally, by reason of their desire for re-election, all have to keep in close touch with and educate their constituents; and all practise moderation so as not to offend those doubtful electors who may, or may not, vote for them next time.

#### IGNORANCE

What are the charges made against Members of Parliament? That some are ignorant, and they should all have to pass an examination before being allowed to stand for Parliament! This, of course, is said by specialists who have written books or articles which the M.P. has not, and will not read. In fact few M.P.s read less than two dailies and one weekly paper; most are writers themselves, which is the best method of acquiring detailed knowledge. Indeed, rubbing shoulders with all men, they acquire the best of educations. I am a fair sample. By profession I am a civil engineer; I have been a civil servant, have travelled widely, have twice held commissions in the Army, twice in the Navy.

For wide reading, critical judgment, and knowledge of the world, the society of the Houses of Parliament stands head and shoulders above all other, even that of the Fleet Street journalists and the barristers of the Inns of Court. The Trade Union section of the Labour Party are not so well-read as their fellows, know less history, and are ignorant of the classics; but they make up for that by greater knowledge both of local government and their fellow men. It has often been said that the finest autobiography written in the last twenty years in the English language is *A Man's Life* by Jack Lawson, Miners' Member for Chester-le-Street. To which may be added that I can find you in the House of Commons a specialist in every subject, even in the setting of crossword puzzles!

## LAZINESS

Then it is said (chiefly by the other side in their constituency) that M.P.s are lazy. Many speak but rarely—either in the Chamber or in Committee, or in the country. Their names do not get into the papers, and their constituents feel defrauded and dub them lazy. In many cases such M.P.s have their livelihood to win in their own professions or businesses; Parliament is, with them, a side line, a part-time job, even an after-dinner variety show. If we were all professional politicians the House of Commons would be terrible. If the chorus all wanted to do star turns, the stage would be a riot, if not a shambles. Even now ten men rise to speak directly one sits down. If they all spoke I should very rarely have a chance to enlighten the House. Thank heaven for the lazy ones who are content to cheer Churchill!

Every by-election provokes a spate of letters to the Press complaining that the local Conservative Party caucuses will not select the bright young brains of the Tory Party, but prefer silent men of substance. I give away no confidences by stating that the bright young geniuses in the Labour Party feel (but dare not write) in like manner about the safe seats which go to the nominees of the rich Trade Unions. It was of old the practice in the Miners' Unions to find seats in Parliament for their superannuated Agents, and thus augment their old friends' inadequate pensions. Neither Party, by this common practice, secures the most energetic representation; but they do acquire certain 'noddies', quite agreeable to the Party Whips. Blame, if there is to be blame, must be with the Party system. I do not like that system; but this use of Parliament as a mausoleum is one of the least of my charges against Party management.

## NODDERS, AND LABOUR RULES

The third charge made against Members of Parliament, probably best founded and most serious, is that they show so little independence and do always as they are told. Party discipline tends ever to become more strict, and the penalties for the breaking of Party Rules become ever more formidable. No aspirant may become a candidate for the Labour Party, either for local Councils or for Parliament, without solemnly undertaking to obey the Party Rules. Till this undertaking is signed the candidature will not be endorsed at Headquarters. The Rules are that one may not vote against any decision come to by the weekly meetings of the Party M.P.s. One may abstain from the vote and may speak against the Party view, but the Labour M.P. or Town Councillor must not vote against the Party decision. That I hold to be an infringement of the rights and duties of Members of Parliament. Party decisions of this sort in old days were not numerous; they are now frequent, and the Rule is being silently extended to cover all decisions that have to be made by the *pro tem* Party leader on the spur of the moment in the course of any debate.

I could never have joined the Labour Party had this Rule been in practice in 1919. It is a surrender of conscience, reason and duty which ought to be intolerable to any Member of Parliament. Members of Parliament are not instructed delegates; they are there to hear, weigh and decide, according to their own judgment, every issue put before them. The coercion of these Rules is a first step in the direction of Fascism and Nazi-ism. It sets Party before country, force above reason. Debate becomes useless; and electors

are betrayed. The public are entitled to know how their representative votes. It was a triumph for democracy when secret voting was ended by the record and publication of votes given in the House. But the Party meeting is private, no record is taken of the votes.

What is the position of the enquiring elector who had perhaps received a pledge before giving his vote. He may ask, "Why did you vote for extending drink licences?" and be answered, "That was the Party decision." The elector may then ask, and ask in vain: "How did you vote on the matter at the Party meeting?" only to be told "That was private, I must not say." Decisions, secretly arrived at, and imposed by threat of expulsion and ruin, square with no definition of democracy, nor with government by reason. Disciplinary action was never taken against me because I was the answer to the accusation which no British Party cares to accept, of being pledge-bound to an infallible Pope. I was, as it were, 'an outward and visible sign of grace' in the Party, a certificate of liberality.

#### DISCIPLINED 'NODDERS' COME FROM GERMANY

These Labour Party Rules would have been canvassed far more by Press and public had not the Conservative Party drifted in the same direction. Just as both Parties have absorbed from infected Germany a measure of Hitler's anti-Semitism, so they have also accepted some of the dragooning of the authoritarian school. The Labour Party call it 'Majority Rule', as always practised in the Trade Union movement with its catchy watchword: "United we stand, divided we fall". The Conservative Party call it 'discipline', and excuse themselves by a certain pre-war sympathy with Nazi and Fascist 'efficiency'. Both are inspired indeed by fear of independence and of argument. Neither recognizes in such inspiration the acceptance of fascism and the destruction of freedom.

While the Labour Party relies on its Rules and elected Executive, the Nationals or Conservatives rely on reward and punishment. One-Party government, such as we have had with two short breaks for twenty-five years, leaves all promotion and reward in the hands of the caucus. No doughty fighters are needed on the public platform; no power in debate to defeat the enemy is essential to Party success. The Chief Whip or Prime Minister can reward docility rather than brilliance. The punishment of the critic and discontented is also easier—they can be reduced to silence.

#### INCREASE OF CLOSURE ON INDEPENDENCE

The methods of closing debate, not only in the House but also in Standing Committee, have been extended to help Ministers and to halk critics. The power given to Mr. Speaker to select the amendments which can be debated has grave dangers. It might be used to avoid inconvenience to government, and may always render vain the long labours of the independent critic. It would be quite impossible now to hold up an unimportant Bill for weeks on Committee and for nights in the House as we often did in past days. Further, the increased use of allied 'usual channels'—i.e. the Whips of the two sides in unholy alliance for the exaction of discipline—and the acceptance by the Chair of long 'Party Lists' of speakers, have been coupled with curtailment of debate in these recent days. This makes easy that final punishment—the vain attempt to speak repeated all day in the constant failure to 'catch the eye' of Mr. Speaker. You must

be on a Party List, approved by the Party Whip, if you are in the modern Party.

Therefore 'discipline' is easily enforced, as easily by Government as by Labour opposition. This may drive men of independent mind out of Parliament, which would be a calamity. This does justify the complaint of the man in the street that M.P.s are just voting dummies. Both Parties are equally to blame for the accusation and for its degree of justice.

#### THE CURE FOR SUCH DRAGOONING

The Labour Party may be cured by losing the confidence of the electorate; for the black-coated worker and Non-conformist dislike their M.P. being controlled by the Trade Union machine. The Liberal Party, in the great Parliaments of 1906-18, used none of these adventitious aids to discipline; and there is more than a little identity between the Liberal voter of 1906 and the modern Labour elector, gazing askance at the more rigid Communist Party.

The Conservative Party may be cured by perceiving whither they drift under discipline; and also Churchill hardly needs methods which may have been required to preserve his predecessors in office. The House, too, has the matter largely in its own hands. It has only to resolve to abolish Party recommendations for speakers, and it gets rid of the worst disciplinary punishment.

But it remains my profound conviction that Parties destroyed Parliaments in Germany, France, Italy and Spain; and that the pernicious development of Parties in this country during the last 50 years is here, also, the gravest danger to our democracy.

If I have overdrawn in this chapter both the virtues and the vices of Members of the British Parliament, the reader must remember that the present time of war gives no fair picture of Parliament, and that generalizations based on pre-war days will not easily be translated into post-war practice.

#### CHAPTER THREE

#### PARLIAMENT MEN AT WORK

*"When you have convinced thinking men that it is right, and humane men that it is just, you will gain your cause. Men lose half of what is gained by violence. What is gained by argument is gained forever."*

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

STILL today the highest ambition of Englishmen is a seat in the House of Commons. Consequently this produces competition among the best men, and women, for seats. The predominant sense of duty in the House, standards, traditions and conscience—provides a corporate body of rulers with virtues which often drive out individual vices such as covetousness, cowardice, and laziness; so that they shine by comparison with similar bodies elsewhere. Above all, they develop and spread throughout the nation a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the world, and even some knowledge of political economy.

That has been described in the previous chapters. Let me now describe the M.P.'s career from start to finish, and so show both the critic-ruler and the education he receives and gives, under British conditions.

## THE BOY

The average English boy begins to read the newspapers at the age of 14, probably to see the cricket scores or football news, and drifts thence into the Foreign Intelligence and parliamentary reports. He generally inherits his political inclinations from his father, and his teachers avoid influencing his opinions by conveniently halting English history at a date before he was born. What modern politics and history he knows comes from back numbers of *Punch*. At college or in the workshops, from 19 onwards, friends may drag him either into sport or into politics. Politics are generally of the Left, for youth likes to shock his elders and feel up to date—wise amid a sea of ignorance. Among the working class, the chapel society fills the place of college for the more fortunately situated. Wide sympathies come naturally to youth, and droop after marriage. At least the youth has time to acquire a hero, take part in a debate, and assist at an election contest.

## THE CANDIDATE

I was asked to stand as socialist candidate for Jarrow-on-Tyne before my 21st birthday, and for the Newcastle-on-Tyne City Council shortly after. Then marriage and the cares of this world dissipated politics, and damped down my urgent desire to educate and direct mankind. Some, coming from the ruling families, are more lucky and fight seats and even get elected before they are 30; others, with less money or opportunity, revisit at election times the dreams of aspiring youth. All remember every General Election, when they cheered or groaned as the Party gains or losses were recorded at midnight, under the naphtha flares in the market square.

However, we will suppose that there is a vacancy for a candidate for the Borough of X. (It is perhaps more distinguished to sit for a County division as 'knight of the shire', but such seats cost more to fight, so—Borough or County, it is no matter!) The local Party leaders, weighing wealth against ability, approach the aspirant rather in the manner of backers approaching a prize-fighter. He addresses the Party Five Hundred in a carefully-conned speech which, if wise, he will confine to the merits of the Party and the virtues of the statesmen who lead it. With crusading zeal, I ventured on disputed questions and nearly got 'ploughed' on Home Rule for Ireland. Whereafter the local press took me to their hearts and attended all my meetings in the not unjustified hope of a 'story'.

## THE CANDIDATE AS FIGUREHEAD

The candidate becomes immediately the sole figurehead. He does not, as in America, share the fight with judges, governors, mayors, councillors and executive officers. The limelight focuses on him alone, and on him alone falls the work. He imports political stiffs to draw the curious to his meetings—at which he arrives late, followed by a bunch of cheer-leaders. Some candidates scarify their opponent, and his arguments, and especially anything he has put in print. I have found this unwise, since it provides said opponent with something to talk about, and it may lead to a libel action. Others never mention the fellow's name, as though people could hardly know of his insignificant existence.

After your speech comes the 'heckling'. Questions, verbal and in writing, are showered upon you. You tire hecklers out by answering at considerable



length, until the chairman says that you must rush off to another meeting. It is a mistake to 'score off' hecklers and raise a laugh on them; you can, in that way, considerably annoy an honest but unintelligible supporter. But with a drunken opponent you may effectively beg him to repeat his question again and again, if possible inducing him to stand on a chair to be the better heard (and seen). Never forget that you are providing a music-hall show as well as moral elevation. This sort of thing cost me £400 a year.

As the polling day approaches, the *tempo* rises, till every elector has been canvassed by both sides, till every window bears your portrait or his, till all the children wear his colours or yours and sing the right, or wrong, election song.

#### THE ELECTION

On the day itself, all schools close and become polling stations, the children march, dressed in either blue or red, singing as a perpetual refrain, "Vote, Vote, Vote for Mr. Jackson", or as the case may be, while in twenty-four committee-rooms volunteers strike off your men's names as they record their votes, and dash out to drag from their homes those 'promises' who have not yet voted.

In those days we polled over 90 per cent of the electorate: the sick were carried from their beds; cars travelled 100 miles to fetch an absent voter; you knew and watched for every dead opponent.

The ballot boxes were collected by cars, and at 9 p.m. the counting started in the Town Hall. Here, backed by twenty flushed supporters, you met, probably for the first time, your opponent, similarly backed. If the candidates do not shake hands there is a story for the Press. You look over the shoulders of the official counters, inevitably watching a box in which your opponent seems to beat you by two to one. Move on; they are not all as bad as that. Gradually a smile of satisfaction steals over your face as one by one your supporters, also looking on, walk past you, furtively grasp your hand and whisper, "Audley's 10 to 1; solid!" The tabulated results from more and more boxes are taken up to the dais to the recording Town Clerk; bad voting papers are scrutinized. Now the last slip of paper is passed up, and all the room turns towards him as he checks and adds up the figures and hands a paper to the Mayor.

"In, by 2207"; word flies round the room and round the town before ever the Mayor can read out the figures. Straightway pandemonium breaks loose.

On the balcony, overlooking a sea of upcast faces, the Mayor tries vainly to be heard as he declares the latest of a 600-year-long line, to be "duly elected and returned Member of Parliament for the Borough of X". The victor moves, and the defeated candidate seconds (somewhat sourly) a vote of thanks to Mr. Mayor, the returning officer; but nothing is heard for the roar outside where four thousand frenzied men and women wait to seize their hero and carry him towards his ruined car. It is the culmination of years of hard work, the proudest moment of his life—and possibly the last happy moment for some time; such is the difficulty of remaining a hero.

Success in sport is nothing to success in politics. Of course, in spite of the odds hardening as the day approaches, many have made money. But among that waving crowd of caps and hats are many chapel elders, tight-lipped, feeling as though Marston Moor had been won again for the saints. There too are the rebels with tears in their eyes, almost believing that what he has said will come true in their time.



### THE OLD MACHINE

It is from this atmosphere, almost of dedication, that the man goes up to Westminster. There he finds 614 others, fresh from promises, devotion and victory. The old machine has seen that crowd a hundred times—a thousand times—before, and moves so slowly in the cold, old hands of the great, experienced, tactful bureaucracy. There is much to be said for, as well as against, the American 'spoils' system. In America, executive and bureaucracy change with a change of President, 'the spoils to the victors'. When this extends to postmasters, the 'spoils system' certainly goes too far; but I think the heads of the Civil Service should be inclined by affection to facilitate a new administration.

I became, at once, parliamentary private secretary (unpaid) to my friend Walter Runciman, M.P., who was Under-Secretary to the Right Hon. John Burns, at what is now the Ministry of Health. John Burns had been a socialist agitator, the terror of respectable London. His permanent officials said of him: "When first John came in, with his bowler hat and reefer jacket, we were a bit nervous. But now, bless you, he feeds out of our hands." This is too generally the case with Labour Ministers, even when drawn from the 'Master-Class'.

### THE PRIVATE MEMBER

The enthusiasts arrive, bursting with energy, and the cold tap of reality chills their heart. "What can we do if we have no chance to bring in Bills or move resolutions?" I once said in despair to John Morley. "The function of the private Member," coldly replied the sage, "is to popularize in the country the policy of his Party." So I spent *my* time asking John Morley, then Secretary of State for India, inconvenient questions about the government of that country; while he put through those Morley-Minto reforms which permanently divided Indians into two distinct electing-pens, labelled 'Mahommedan' and 'Hindoo'. We have never been able to get rid of this and it is still the supreme bar to democracy in India.

### STONE-WALLING BY THE DEPARTMENTS

Our youthful enthusiast for the regeneration of mankind gradually finds himself up against two mighty stone walls, two inert organizations trained and equipped to resist just such as himself. He has arrived among the rulers, but by no means as a dictator. His bowling is stone-walled by the Party machine and by the bureaucracy—known collectively and colloquially as 'the Departments'.

The Departments stone-wall even their Secretaries of State, their under-secretaries, and the parliamentary private secretaries, unpaid (hereafter known as the P.P.S.s). It is their business to show that 'it can't be done'. They perform the really useful function of *advocatus diaboli*; and their criticism, based on years of experience, and special knowledge, fortified by the practice and traditions of the office, make them well-nigh irresistible. Their first weapon, used to break in the new Ministers, is tact. They convey to each new Minister their conviction that he is the best and most intelligent

master they have ever had. They ever regret (in words) the obstinacy of the Treasury, and fall back whenever pressed upon this invaluable partner in resistance. The Minister will, however, confer a lasting benefit on the State if he can persuade the Cabinet to give time for the passage into law of a most important measure which, alas, his predecessor was unable to put through. And they produce from their pigeon-holes some one of those 'innocuous' measures they keep permanently in cold storage, the measure they think would best suit the Minister's tastes. So he is kept occupied and pacified, and in due course a new Housing or Small Holdings Act appears upon the Statute Book; while the Rating of Land Values, and suchlike revolutionary matter, can be postponed for further enquiry as hardly likely at present to enhance the Minister's credit for practical efficiency.

The only way to defeat such stone-walling is to get the head of the particular Department, or better still his prospective successor, on your side by personal and social contact. Do not pester him, but when found behind the Speaker's Chair in the House of Commons, sweep him off to the bar for a quick one with the boys. Visit him in his office for a gossip. No attention paid to the Civil Servant is ever wasted. He is really human at bottom, and in due course will actually suggest to you the questions he wishes to have asked of 'his minister' in the House. Under the surface he may develop a new enthusiasm for his job, and lose that scared defensive look with which he normally greets the M.P. gad-fly.

#### THE HOME OFFICE

Each Department has of course its own technique and character. Naturally, I always found the Home Office most 'allergic'. They deal with that less pleasing side of socialism involving constant coercion of the individual for what they believe to be the good of the State. They manufacture crime in the interests of virtue. They modify the justice of the Law Courts with the expediency of the administrator. They share with the Gestapo a liking for an indeterminate sentence 'during pleasure', of course in hope of 'reform'.

But they always have Bills on hand—to prevent prostitution, or money-lending, or share-pushing, or buying at auctions, or going on strike, or putting brass plates on a professional door, or being a nurse, or an architect, or an undertaker, or a dentist, unless you have been accepted by the favoured organization and do not overcrowd the profession. They provide more and more work for 'their' Police, looking after 'their' public. In short, they hope to coerce us into being good some time; but cannot believe that they themselves ever could, or should ever, be dispensed with. Emphatically they disbelieve in the perfectibility of human nature, or the supremacy of conscience over law. In common with 'Military Intelligence' they suspect all men, and would like to license and inspect all our goings-on and our lyings-down.

Their appetite has grown immensely in the last 40 years. I foresee a time when every trade will be constricted and canalized, in like manner to the professions. Sometimes outsiders call it Guild Socialism, sometimes syndicalism, sometimes P.E.P., sometimes fascism; but they themselves call it regulation and planning. Mussolini made the trains run to time. Could there be a higher goal—for the British Home Office?

THE PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

The Home Office is of peculiar and great interest to the private Member—evidently to me also from another angle. Normally 10½ hours a week of parliamentary time is allotted to private Members to introduce Resolutions of the House or Bills to be debated and, if the Speaker thinks fit, to be voted on. Exigencies of the public service generally cut down the time by half, but normally some twenty private Members have a chance to get their Bill through its Second Reading in the House, whence it goes to Standing Committee upstairs to be put into shape with the help of the Government. The first few to get through Committee have then a chance to get their Bill through Report stage and Third Reading, whereafter, if there is time, the Lords will deal with it.

The Resolutions serve the useful purpose of securing a debate on any question of the moment. But naturally no Government wants to have inconvenient Resolutions or Bills. Therefore all of the 550 non-ministerial M.P.s are encouraged to ballot for the chances of 'getting time', so that those members who are likely to be annoying may not have it all their own way. The Whips supply the lists of subjects or Bills of which they approve, and it is not often that Resolutions inconvenient to both Parties get beyond appearing on the Paper. With Bills it is otherwise. Labour M.P.s are supposed to select from the list of Party Bills; but National M.P.s have latitude. The lucky man is at once besieged by all the Societies for Propaganda, from Anti-Vivisection to the Auctioneers Association. There must be fifty societies of this sort who have a Bill ready, to improve the world and assist their members. All are well-intentioned; but I regret to say that most of their Bills involve putting into prison some innocent person—innocent, that is, until the Bill becomes an Act of Parliament.

Few notice this penal clause, so intent are they on 'doing good'. I always attend with pleasure on those Friday afternoons, when both sides chorus approval of some impertinent Bill, in order maliciously to prick the bubble of benevolence. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is one which all should support. They have a Bill for the licensing and inspecting of livery stables to prevent 'crops' being hired out for butchers to ride. Ninety-nine out of a hundred would vote for it blindfold. Why not?

Or the Bill is to raise the age of consent. Why not?

Or to license dentists, or nurses, or architects, or shoeblacks when there were any. Why not?

Or the Bill is to limit interest demanded by moneylenders; or to prevent 'knock-out' sales; or to disinfect prostitutes; or to compel canal barges to send their children to school; or to close shops on Sunday; or to stop fools from being fleeced.

I would undertake to make out a case for each and all of these Bills which should move the House. Only—are you justified in sending an unlicensed man, or boy, or girl, to gaol in the sacred 'interests of society'? Are you justified in closing professions to the poor, in the interests of those already in the profession? Are you justified in raising the cost to the consumer? Are you justified in smashing a man whose business was legal, even useful, possibly honourable? I do not know; maybe you are. But before an amiable majority, on a Friday afternoon (or any majority at any time), decides that you should do so, let them be asked to reflect that expediency

and emotion are poor guides, that the individual 'has certain inalienable rights', and that every political crime, including the crucifixion, has been in accord with the will of a majority.

#### A PARABLE

Xenophon tells this story of the education of the younger Cyrus : That he might learn how to rule, his father appointed the boy judge of a children's court. There were brought before him a big boy and a little boy, and the little boy was crying bitterly. "He has taken my coat," he said. Cyrus turned to the big boy : "Have you taken his coat ?" "Yes, I have, but please, sir, I gave him my own in exchange, because his is too big for him and mine was too small for me." "Oh !" said Cyrus. "Let us see." Behold, the little boy's coat did fit the big boy, and the big boy's coat fitted the little boy. When Cyrus saw this he was well pleased. "So it shall be," he said : but the little boy went away, still crying bitterly. The courtiers marvelled at such wisdom, and Cyrus ran to his father to tell him how clever he had been. Darius, however, ordered him to be whipped, saying, "I sent you to do justice ! Who made you a fitter of coats ?"

There are too many 'fitters of coats' on a Friday afternoon. Parliament, I would remind my colleagues, was, and should ever remain, the High Court of Justice, not a Petty Court of Pie-powder. Most of those private Members' Bills are watched over by the Home Secretary, who is in charge of police and prisons. It should be his business to play the part of Darius. Unfortunately, neither he nor his officials have clean hands. Their Bills are of a like nature.

#### 'ADMINISTRATIVE' LAW

It is doubtful, indeed, whether the Home Office or the Ministry of Health insert into their draft Acts of Parliament more matters that 'are to be set out hereafter in Rules and Regulations', *i.e.* unchecked by Parliament. It is certain that association with either of these Departments is too apt to develop admiration for the slick efficiency of fascism, which pervades the Departments and invades Parliament.

These 'Rules' having the force of law, yet devised by the Bureaucracy and not by Parliament, have developed into what is called 'Administrative Law'. It has been discussed and described by William Robson<sup>1</sup> and denounced by Lord Hewart in a memorable Philippic.<sup>2</sup> Such 'law' is of course a step in the direction of fascism, a substitution of departmental, or even corporative, rules for laws enacted by Parliament.

It is brought about by the complications due to the interference of the State with every field of human endeavour. Such interference often involves an attempt to get round natural laws. The attempts result in the natural law hitting back like a punching-ball ; every hit back has to be countered by modifications of the 'Rules' and fresh 'Rules' are devised to get round the difficulty. Bills to defeat natural laws cannot be drafted so as to meet unexpected consequences. Therefore either amending Acts are required, or the amending must be done without the trouble of parliamentary sanction. The first involves admission of error by the Department ; therefore (and for speed) the second method is preferred by every Department. It leaves the Executive as Autocrat. It is particularly convenient in war-time.

<sup>1</sup> *Administrative Law*, William Robson.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Despotism*, Gordon Hewart.

Three different methods of making 'Rules' into law have been invented in the last thirty years.

(1) The Bill gives the Department a free hand, and is generally followed up by the appointment of committees which issue public reports upon which executive action and regulations are based; *e.g.* the Government of India Acts. This does not prevent Parliament from making suggestions for special exemption by means of provisos to the Rules and Regulations Clause. For example: 'Provided nevertheless that women shall have votes on the same terms as men.' Or: 'Provided that no such Rules shall be enacted without the express sanction of Parliament.'

(2) The Bill requires that the Rules and Regulations lie on the Table of the House for a varying number of Parliamentary days before becoming effective. During that time protest *may* be made and time *must* be given for the protest to be debated and voted on.

(3) While lying on the Table, the Government must get the express sanction of the House to the Rules, which generally cannot then be amended by vote of the House.

If some vested interest is affected adversely, that interest can get a chance of airing its grievance. As there are few to look after the general interest, none of these methods of getting round Parliament is of much service to democracy. The only way to ensure democratic control is to modify (3) so that amendments to the Rules should be accepted by the Chair. In that case, save for the absence of a Report stage, the Rules become in effect a further Government Bill.

Any reform of this growing habit of avoiding Parliament should begin by the appointment of a Royal Commission to consider the matter from that angle. It only remains to be said that Parliament has shown itself ever jealous and resentful of these powers given to the Departments; but the Executive has ever connived at the practice and resisted protest from lawyers and democrats on every side of the House.

#### THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Of those private Members' Bills which do not endanger liberty, most concern the Ministry of Health. For no private Member's Bill may involve any charge upon the taxpayer; thus, if expense is involved, it must fall upon local rates. Therefore such Bills permit, but do not compel, all Local Authorities to enact local by-laws concerning pig-sties, or buildings, or buying of land, or the opening of business as bankers, transporters or landlords. The vested interests on local councils prevent the more risky of these ventures being operated. As, however, my own hardy annual is one of such Bills, I should explain that some of these Ministry of Health measures are liberating rather than authoritarian or penal. The opening of a municipal bank, or of a common wash-house, or of a city tram service, competes with, but need not necessarily suppress, the existing businesses of other people. The consumer reaps a direct advantage from the competition so long as the fascist-socialist corporative State allows the competition to continue.

#### RATING OF LAND VALUES

Completely liberal in this sense is my hardy annual—a Bill to permit all Local Authorities to levy local taxation on a different basis from that employed at present. For at present all local taxes (or rates) in England are

levied upon the occupiers of property, measured by the rent paid for the building and any land upon which the building stands. Unused and agricultural land is exempt from such taxation. I desire to levy these rates upon land value alone, and so free from taxation buildings and improvements. The idea is that such taxation on land value discourages owners from keeping land idle or putting it to inferior use, and equally encourages the application of labour and capital to land, and the erection of buildings and improvements. Wherever this method is employed—as in Sydney or Johannesburg—suburban land comes into the market freely and cannot be held up. The British system, of exempting *unused* land from any tax or local rate, allows the owner to lock up such land from use with the greatest ease. As idle land inevitably means idle men, here is one of the main causes of unemployment.

In few countries is local taxation so idiotic as in Great Britain. In America, local taxation is levied on unused as well as used land, and there is a complete valuation of land throughout the New England States. Unfortunately, these townships value also, and tax also, the improvements upon the land, though in some places at a lower poundage than the rate levied upon the land value. The valuation of both land and buildings, showing area and owner, is open to the public, which publicity acts as a perfect check upon bureaucratic injustice. If I hold the British system of democratic rule at Westminster superior to any other, I give the like preference to the township democratic rule of the New England States. If I were dictator, I would import it and impose it on old England even at the point of the bayonet. But it would need the bayonet to shift some of our landlords.

Therefore my hardy annual, once received with oaths, is now received with laughter, and slaves still hug their fetters.

#### RESOLUTIONS

I have been writing of the rare opportunities enjoyed (and generally misused) by private Members to make laws. But any Member at any time can get his Bill through first reading and printed for circulation to those who care to agitate for the proposal. The wise M.P., faced by any heckler with such questions as, "Are you in favour of the Douglas Credit Scheme?" or "of eradicating vice and establishing virtue?"—will reply: "Put your ideas in the shape of a Bill and then I shall understand exactly what you want." It is always good for everyone's understanding to draft—or try to draft—a Bill.

It is, however, much easier for the enthusiast to put his ideas into the form of a Resolution, and for the debating of Resolutions there is also a chance of winning a place in the ballot:

—That, in the opinion of this House, socialism is the only remedy for unemployment.

—That, in the opinion of this House, the influence of the Vatican (or the Cabinet) has grown, is growing, and ought to be diminished.

—That, in the opinion of this House, the House of Lords should be abolished.

—That, in the opinion of this House, *women* should have votes (or pay) on the same terms as men.

Anyone can draft Resolutions according to taste and put them on Paper. Then, if lucky in the ballot, he can make a resounding speech on his

pet theory; and anyone who has put down an amendment can also be resonant on the other side—distracting the hunter with a good red-herring. The appropriate Minister or Under-Secretary dances over the subject like an amiable cat on hot bricks, and the Chief Whip puts up a back-bench Member to talk it out if he feels that a vote might be inconvenient.<sup>1</sup> If the Resolution is carried, it can rarely make any difference, unless there is direct censure of some official. In that case, it is either defeated or it is withdrawn on promise of enquiry by the Minister concerned.

#### ON QUESTIONS AND THE ADJOURNMENT

Question hour, the first hour of each day (except Friday), is the most important feature of Parliament. It is the grand inquest on the bureaucracy, the main chance for democracy to keep officials in check. Every ministerial head of a Department must in turn provide answers to every complaint of official stupidity or injustice that any private Member may choose to bring forward. Some 70 Questions are asked daily, answered officially, and can be followed by supplementary Questions to which the Minister must give uncoached answers. It is in this quick battle of wits that a Minister suffers or shines; while his questioner strives to be intelligible at short notice before the Speaker rises and shuts him up. At times of stress the House becomes riotous with interjections at Question time. Foreign Office Questions during the Spanish Civil War exercised such strong moral influence on Capt. Eden as to determine him to resign. Questioning on internment without trial under Regulation 18B causes Sir Irving Albery to forget the correctitude of the Stock Exchange. But only the rashest man dare ever put a Supplementary to Mr. Churchill, so quickly does he frame his answer, and rouse the House to laughter against the questioner. There is no better preparation for speaking in the House than by acquiring courage and nimbleness as an impenitent questioner in face of a barracking fire from both sides—which barracking fortunately escapes report.

The baited and exasperated victim of a sense of duty often concludes with: "Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that I will raise this matter on the adjournment at the earliest opportunity." (More laughter.) More rarely (and rarely with success), he substitutes "at the end of Questions", for "the earliest opportunity". Then, at the end of Questions, he asks the Speaker's permission "to raise a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely . . ." The occasions when the present Speaker thinks the matter both 'definite' and 'urgent' are indeed rare. "It could have been raised yesterday", or "it can be raised tomorrow", or "hardly definite", suffice. But if he has been talked to beforehand, or thinks a Government statement needed, he may say: "Have you the leave of the House?" Then, if forty Members rise in their place, debate begins at 7.30 on a motion that the House do adjourn, and other business is postponed.

This occurs hardly once a year. But a short debate on the adjournment may take place any night after the end of business, and continue till 11.30 p.m. Business rarely ends before 11 p.m., so that the Member has half an hour to state the case and get an answer from the Minister. As the Minister invariably talks out time, no further reply or debate can take place and no one else can join in. Members drift off home or to their last train at 11 p.m., and few stay to hear the case. A tired and unsympathetic Chief Whip will

<sup>1</sup> If debate is still continuing at eleven of the clock no division can be taken.



then hint to a henchman to rise and say: "Mr. Speaker, I beg to call your attention to the fact that there are not forty Members present." Mr. Speaker rises; the unfortunate has to sit down, his speech undone, while Mr. Speaker remarks: "Attention has been called to the fact that there are not forty Members present." A bell rings all round the premises, while policemen bawl "Count". If the frustrated orator is a good sort, popular, with a good case, Members will come back from passage home to 'make' a House. At the end of two minutes the Speaker stands up and counts aloud those present: "35, 36, 37, 38." Alas, there are no more, and the unfortunate man folds up his undelivered speech, and goes out asking with a scowl: "Who was the blighter who moved that count?"

#### SUPPLY DAYS

The established and accepted time to criticize the bureaucracy is on the twenty annual occasions when the House discusses the administration of the various Ministries: Treasury, War Office, Admiralty, Air Ministry, Home Office, Board of Trade, Colonial Office, Ministry of Health, India Office, Post Office, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scottish Office, Board of Education, Mines Department, Pensions Ministry, Dominions Office, Foreign Office, or special war-time ministries of *Economic Warfare, Supply, Aircraft Production, Works and Planning, Fuel, Information, Food, Production*, etc.

We have twenty days a year to discuss these Departments, both policy and administration, but not proposed legislation. The Minister reports on the work of the past year—generally for an hour; then follows a selection of those who are critics and those who are grateful and therefore adulatory. It is difficult, but not impossible, for a back-bench critic to get the chance of a twenty-minute speech. The Minister, or his Under-Secretary, replies again shortly at the end, when all are yawning and forgetful. Points difficult to answer become so easily forgotten by the end of a debate. Twenty days for such debate and vote are all that Government need give, and criticism by means of Question and Supplementary remains the most effective check upon the bureaucracy.

#### SHOULD ONE SPECIALIZE?

New Members are always advised to specialize. The large number of Departments (mentioned in the last section), which are available for the exercise of the critical or constructive faculty renders it unlikely that anyone can know each equally well. To attempt such omniscience would mean not being called on to speak, it would not please the Whips, nor even fellow Members. But specialization on one Department is dull, and less useful than piratical raids on many subjects from a special angle. I have specialized on attack from the freedom angle, upon Finance, Colonies, India, Foreign Affairs, Home Office, as well as, professionally, on Army, Navy, and Constitutions. Therefore my average annual contribution of columns to *Hansard* has exceeded that of any other M.P. of the last 36 years. Fortunately, from that point of view, I have been generally in opposition; so that some at least have always welcomed my garrulity. The exasperation



of three Mr. Speakers and a dozen Chief Whips has been balanced by the appreciation always shown by a bored House to a fresh point of view. My own exasperation and despair at not being called three times as often as I was should be set against the valuable education one gets preparing speeches, and spotting the logical points of attack and the false arguments of others. In my first Parliament, when I prepared my speeches to the extent of writing them out in full and sometimes learning them by heart, I always consoled myself by using the undelivered speech as an article for the Liberal Press, thus securing a substantial solatium, and a place in the most enthralling of professions.

Sir Charles Dilke, that old Parliamentary hand, took a kindly interest in my youthful enthusiasms. He gave me three pieces of advice: (1) Speak in the House once a fortnight; (2) Always be in the House, for Questions and for the quarter hour thereafter, again round 8 o'clock when the change-over takes place, and for the last speech and adjournment; (3) Put two Questions a week and force yourself to put at least one Supplementary to each. For long I followed this practice, thereby picking up much general knowledge and considerable facility, also becoming well known to both sides of the House.

The specialist has a more comfortable life; he gets called on to speak on the rare occasions when he can oblige, he knows his subject; perhaps he gets quicker promotion. Sir Laming Worthington Evans and Dr. Addison both reached Cabinet rank by specializing on National Health Insurance. But I cannot remember any others who 'struck oil' in this manner. Prime Ministers are apt to doubt the value as colleagues of those who exceed the wisdom proper to servants. Probably the M.P.s great decision between specialization and pervasion should depend upon the character, education and ability of the individual. If constructive, painstaking, exact, business-like—choose specialization and you will have a useful, if not a brilliant, career. Widely read, versatile, humane, and of liberal mind—choose the world for your football, but do not imagine that it will be grateful for your choice!

If your ambition is to get on (and I hope it is), there is no real need to make any choice between specialization and omniscience. The best way of getting on in the House of Commons—as in every other sort of society—is to be liked without looking for it, to be earnest in season, to have good manners, with selfishness concealed if not subjugated, and to love your country better than yourself.

#### BILLS IN STANDING COMMITTEE

It is a commonplace that more work is done in the Committee Rooms than in the Chamber. No Member of Parliament fails to assure his constituents that publicity reaches but a small part of his immense labours. "There are the Committees, you know," he says with mystery.

That mysterious row of 16 Committee Rooms has seen and heard much. In one, throughout a long week, the Catholic Church broke Parnell; in another, the Labour M.P.s meet weekly to discuss and decide in secret what ought to be discussed and decided in public; in another, week after week, year after year, sits an immortal Public Accounts Committee, ever cross-examining the Civil Servants, and ever backing up the watch-dogs of the Treasury. One may be buried for life in the Public Accounts Committee with consciousness of virtue as one's only consolation. Other M.P.s, equally devoted, acquire a reputation for impartiality and the judicial mind. These,

I believe, sit ever on Private Bill Committees, examining plans, hearing expert evidence and the princes of the parliamentary bar, and attempting to secure uniformity of practice from Thurso to Torquay.

Should you be one of those amiable benefactors of mankind who are unable to say, "No, I am too busy!" you will besiege the Serjeant-at-Arms Office to book a Committee Room for the virtuous people who haunt the Central Hall in the interests of every phase of humanity. You will then purchase House of Commons stationery, and agree to sign a whip to such of your fellow Members as the lobbying gentlemen (or ladies) consider reliable, asking them to attend in Committee Room X on such and such day and hour, to hear a distinguished outsider explain the situation. Few come, but those who have signed the whip feel bound to desert the Chamber (or the Smoking Room) and receive enlightenment. Thereafter you tell the lobby journalists just enough—or sometimes too much—to secure the right publicity for the cause of the moment. Frequently the meeting ends with an attempted deputation to the Prime Minister, whose private secretary will foist you off upon a stone-walling colleague.

There are also Select Committees, Joint Committees, and even Royal Commissions, meeting in that familiar row—but the great work is on Standing Committee on Government Bills, with the Minister in charge of his Bill, and reporters sharpening their pencils.

Government Bills, as well as private Members' Bills, undergo scrutiny and amendment before some 50 M.P.s from both sides, on one or other of the Standing Committees. The Committee Clerks flank the Chairman on the dais and guide him on points of procedure. Two Ministers and perhaps a Law Officer lead the government forces from the right, the opposition face them across the floor as in the Chamber. Civil Servants and draftsmen are present to coach the Minister.

So rare are liberating proposals, that I start with a general desire to oppose new laws and support the repeal of most old ones. Therefore I can always approach Standing Committee with a clear conscience. I have little interest or belief in the success of the measure; but I feel it my duty to attempt to point out its worst defects. To do this with understanding one must attend the debate on the Second Reading and discover who wants it and why. One soon discovers that the public has an interest in the opposite direction. A few hours must then be spent on drafting amendments to the Bill in this opposite direction—amendments in which you can believe and for which you can put up a case. The amendments must make sense and appear at the earliest possible place in the Bill, lest one finds the point already decided. They must be in order, appropriate to the short title of the Clause and involve no expense outside the Money Resolutions. The Chairman will always say if they should come later on or be drafted as a New Clause.

Armed with these amendments, and the case for them, one can make with appealing sincerity a case for liberty and justice as against benevolence and expediency; it may exasperate the bureaucracy but must educate one's colleagues. In many cases one only 'moves' in order to get an explanation. As one can speak repeatedly on Committee, the explanation must be given and is often very revealing of the interests behind the measure. If the Bill is based on the Report of some commission, it is just as well to glance through the evidence besides reading the Report itself.

The most amusing Standing Committee Bills which I remember were :

Small Holdings and Allotments; Housing, Town Planning, etc.; Films Quota; Public Companies; Tithe Redemption; Mental Deficiency; Asylums; and Moneylenders. My opposition to the last won for me a grateful offer of £100 "for any charity in which you are interested", so I thought it better to cease my opposition. After the Committee stage, the Bill goes back to the House for Report and Third Reading. It is quite useless to attempt to fight a Bill on Report unless one has fought it in Committee; but in old days, before the Speaker could select amendments, I once kept the House up two nights running, almost single-handed, on the pleasant subject of that Mental Deficiency which they found so hard to define. Many Government Bills have their Committee stage not in Standing Committee but on the floor of the House. But then the Government can force closure by compartments (*alias* the Gag), in which case Party solidarity substitutes dull reiteration for reasoned debate.

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY

All Finance Bills and most Board of Trade Bills can always be made into platforms for Freedom of Trade, and I have never found any Bill which did not open the door to the Land Question. Once any man is soundly grounded on Free Trade, he can rout every opponent. But few nowadays understand the 'fundamentals' of political economy. Thirty years ago, every political economist was at least a free trader, every political meeting was dominated by the issue, first principles took the place of statistics, and the exact meaning of 'the balance of trade' became a battleground. The post-war depression and deflation broke the Liberal economists, and substituted for them those 'God's-sakers', who cry to Government, 'For God's sake *do* something and stop arguing'.

For thirty years a whole generation of electors had been thoroughly educated in economics. It all went with the wind, and the stoutest champions, such as McKenna, Mond, and Runciman, went over to the stupid enemy. Only those firmly founded on the doctrines of Henry George survived to jeer at the pathetic flounderings of statesmen who built battleships to help the poor, and imagined that they reduced unemployment by putting skilled engineers on to making roads. All cried, "The State must do something"—and nobody knew what. Till at last we slipped off gold, and a depreciated currency provided an automatic tax on imports blessedly accompanied by an equal and opposite bounty on exports. The beauties of inflation are now fully recognized, but what is at the end of the slope down which we rush? There is certainly no compulsory unemployment now!

I venture to think that the modern M.P. teaches less political economy to his electors than they did in my generation. It will be needed again, if democracy and the rule of reason is not to succumb to bureaucracy, price-fixing, subsidies, and fascism. Once, in anger, I told G. B. Shaw that his revolution would put me first up against the wall for shooting. He said, "Oh no! We should put you under a glass case to go on talking." That was just his benevolence and fine toleration; and, possibly, a certain contempt for reason. Whatever the results to themselves, M.P.s who have seen the light had better go on talking.

#### OFFICE

Can politicians not also act, as well as talk and educate? Let us pursue the career of our young politician in the 'Talking Shop'. He has ambitions,

beyond even the most useful criticism. Keen-witted men go far in politics, once they are among the great rulers. He may be intemperate, as I was in the Good Parliament of 1906, and yet advance to higher things, after becoming known as a good all-round debater. From leader of a commando, may he not become leader of a people? He has become popular, not unpopular, by espousing unpopular causes. He is a power on the platform, sent down by his Party to by-elections. The Prime Minister speaks to him in the lobby, his wife is ever on the Terrace or in the Gallery. He has the good sense not to depreciate others; he laughs with, not at, the elders of the Party. Should he cash in?

All aspirants to those Cabinet offices (and salaries) have to pass through some half-dozen years of comparative silence and oblivion, during the incubation period as Under-Secretaries. They may read out answers to Questions written by others, even answer during Question hour for other Departments than their own. On rare occasions they may introduce a departmental Bill, or preside over a departmental enquiry. They learn the workings of the Office. But they may never do what they like, and there is the constant humiliation of finding that the permanent officials are more in the confidence of the chief than is the Parliamentary Under-Secretary. It is not till one reaches the Cabinet that one can once more have a say in the general policy of the Government. Thus it comes about that though few would refuse a junior appointment, if offered, many would not trouble to seek such office. I hated being muzzled in the House during the year I held a small post in the Cabinet; I felt exactly as though I had lost my seat.

#### THE ROTATION OF PARTIES

It is not usually recognized that, however important is the part played by the Executive in Parliament, criticism of the acts of this Executive is really more enjoyable—possibly useful, even if less well paid. That some such criticism has become essential to the proper working of democracy is shown by the salary now paid to the Leader of His Majesty's opposition. Whether that salary conduces to more effective criticism is a disputed point.

This criticism is precisely what constitutes government by reason, and the great virtue of Parliament is that there are always some to find fault with the Government of the day and keep a check upon its actions.

While there are two parties alternately in power, one gets this effective criticism at its best; and the best critics will be chosen for office as soon as the wheel of fortune turns. In such circumstances the critic has ever to remember that it may soon be his turn to be criticized. That makes for moderation, not only in promises.

When I first entered the House, in 1906, I thought that there could never be a Conservative Government in power again, so overwhelming had been the Liberal victory. Surely the swing of the pendulum had come to an end! Yet from 1916 onwards to this very day, with two short intervals, Conservative Governments have been all-powerful. With less chance of (or wish for) power, Labour Party criticism has become less responsible, and political career in Parliament has changed—a career is no longer critical *and* official, but critical *or* official. For those in the governing Party there is no chance of winning experience as a critic or spurs as a future Minister. For the opposition Party (if any) there is less experience of office, less fear of having to deliver the recklessly promised goods.

If the useful functions of Parliament are not to deteriorate under the present united rule, Prime Minister, Speaker, and Chief Whip must give extended opportunities for criticism and encourage it among their own obedient followers. For without criticism and debate the virtue goes out from Parliament and democracy; the rule of reason abdicates to the unchecked rule of force. It is not enough to vote down criticism and reason; a United Government can always do that; Ministers must convince by reason, and welcome every opportunity of expounding their reason. The bureaucracy must face publicity, for that is the only check on inefficiency and corruption. Among the bureaucracy I class the Fighting Services, which too often prefer to conceal 'for the honour of the Army', rather than to punish, for the improvement of the Service.

There is more need today than ever for a politician who shall understand what must be the services rendered by Parliament for the preservation of the virtues of democracy. Never did such work more need unselfishness, as well as courage.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

### PARLIAMENT IN WAR

*"We shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do."*

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL, JUNE 4, 1940.

WE have had many trumpery wars in my time—a war in Egypt with the last spectacular cavalry charge at Kassasin—pictured by Caton Woodville; a war in the Sudan, when 'Fuzzy-Wuzzy broke the square'; a war on the North-West Frontier, when a piper played the bagpipes; a war in South Africa, for which we all volunteered, and which we won on paper. All these 'shows' were Victorian, gentlemanly affairs, run on good old-fashioned lines, carried on by 'the Services'. There was some parliamentary opposition to the South African War, and Mr. Lloyd George had to be escorted by the police (allegedly disguised) from a meeting in Birmingham. The premature 'Khaki Election' of 1900 turned mainly on this 'sort of a war' which had then developed, and the election reduced the Liberal Party to insignificance. That war cost two hundred and fifty millions, and we thought we were ruined! We spend that bagatelle every fortnight now. Then, Parliament never got out of its stride, but 1914 and 1939 produced a revolution in parliamentary life and procedure.

#### CHURCHILL'S REVOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT

One revolution was that Parliament contained a live military genius. Winston Churchill, conscious of, or desiring, a reincarnation of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, had fought in all the trumpery Victorian wars and some others. He had specialized in military history; he bubbled with initiative; he infected or even inspired Parliament—a dull Parliament which balked at inspiration and rather resented his brains.

Yet Parliament, even in 1914, became under Churchill the core of the War Executive as never before. Within a month this First Lord of the

Admiralty was plunging on the land, as well as on the sea, with naval aeroplanes and naval armoured cars; within two months his Naval Brigade marched over Flanders, ill-equipped but vital in the holding of Belgium to the cause. He showered commissions on Members of the House of Commons to lead his amphibian Forces, till the War Office, in sheer self-defence, had to do the same. For the first time Parliament was in the war—with the lime-light flashing on Winston and on all of us. He sent us out to Antwerp, to Gallipoli, to East Africa, to Palestine, as well as to France. Twenty-three M.P.s were killed; twice as many more were wounded! We reported to Churchill or to the Prime Minister; we were the British equivalent of Soviet Commissars, using the Press, the platform, the House, and private appreciations—to the rage and despair of all Brasshattery.

Kitchener, like some fish out of water introduced into a Cabinet of politicians, sulked in silence, determined not to be committed. The First Sea Lord of the Senior Service kicked with disastrous vigour, till both he and Churchill were out in the cold. It was Admiral Fisher who spoilt the dash for the Dardanelles; though I suppose it was Lord Kitchener who stopped the probably more profitable dash for Alexandretta, and turned it on to the Dardanelles instead. In any case, the old days of the free hand for the fighting services vanished. Fighting was no longer a mystery reserved for high priests. Parliament was in it all, and knew too much for the survival of any mysteries or illusions.

#### FRATERNAL UNION

The next noticeable revolution was fraternal Union. Only a month before, the two Parties had been near civil war over Ireland. The Camp at the Curragh had mutinied rather than march against the Ulster Volunteers; Erskine Childers had been running guns into Howth; the Prime Minister had been obliged to take over the War Office; and Liberals were clamouring for the internment of 'Galloper Smith'. Indeed, it was widely supposed that the reports of an aristocratic spy, known in Ireland and at Westminster, had persuaded the Kaiser that Britain was too busily engaged on civil war to care to join in a European scrap. Yet in a trice, with the invasion of Belgium the destiny of counties Fermanagh and Tyrone vanished from politics; and Grey's speech was followed by John Redmond's declaration of Irish support for the common cause. The Conservatives, with lively memories of the S.A. War, thanked Heaven that a Liberal Government was in power; and a mere handful of Socialists and Radicals formed themselves into a Union of Democratic Control to disagree on principle with the immense majority.

#### THE IRISH PARLIAMENTARY PARTY

The Irish Parliamentary Party remained loyal to the end, and to their own destruction. Partly this was due to the general feeling that we were fighting for Catholic France and Belgium rather than for British Imperialism. That their support did result in their destruction by Sinn Féin was largely the fault of the War Office and Lord Kitchener. Had the Irish been allowed to form their own armies, as Redmond wanted, officered by their own people, recruited from Ireland, all the past would have been forgotten. Home Rule would have come with unanimous acclaim at the end of the war,

and two allied nations would now stand side by side. But the Army insisted on the old machine, the old regiments, the old flag; recruiting in Ireland had to be for the British Army. Redmond, the old enemy of England, was met by infinite, if civil, obstruction—and saw the ruin of his Party, and his hopes of reconciliation, perish at the hands of fools.

Partly the Irish Party remained helpful because they were Catholic; partly also because, having spent a lifetime with all the rest of us in Parliament in daily friendly intercourse, they were really relieved at being able to adopt an officially friendly attitude. One cannot hate and dine. Yet only while they hated could they hold their electors, to whom they had so long preached hatred. Could they have been granted but one iota of concession to Irish sentiment, to show to the Irish as some recompense for their alliance with the hated British rule, it might have altered all history. So Willie Redmond and Joe Kettle died in vain—went to their death knowing that they had failed. But they did not altogether fail. Had it not been for the gallantry of the Redmonds, the Irish in America would never have permitted the United States to come into the war, even for the sake of France. We have seen in this present war how the Irish—almost the Irish alone—have built up 'America First' and come near to destroying us. Today, with Italy against us, and Pétain-France and Ireland hostile, the Catholic Church balances dislike against expediency as she contemplates the United Nations.

#### PARLIAMENT BECOMES GOVERNMENT

However, beyond the fact that Parliamentary intercourse brought the Irish into the sacred union of 1914, and effected this revolution of Union, how else did Parliament change in that First War? We then first learnt that Parliament at war becomes itself an Executive Government, that Government means union, that union in war means suppression of the individual. *Inter arma silent leges* (In war justice is dumb), so we resigned ourselves to the equally classical *salus populi suprema lex* (the safety of the State overrules all laws). Parliament normally calls for justice to the individual, and pleads law against bureaucracy. But when Parliament becomes itself the Government, then inevitably its critical functions must decline.

#### DICTATORSHIP

We have only to suppose that all M.P.s become Ministers of the Crown to perceive what must tend to happen. If all were Ministers, each with his own bit of work to do, none could differ from his colleagues on any question and still remain a Minister. He might argue with them in private and in Council, but the majority would decide—or if the issue went to the final authority, the Prime Minister would decide. All would become dependent on and responsible to the Prime Minister, not to their constituents. There could be no open voting, no public discussion, edicts would be issued, unexplained and uncriticized. There could be no remedy for grievances in or through Parliament. The Prime Minister would be an absolute unchecked dictator, with ears open only to such Ministers as he might prefer.

In such a place-man's paradise democracy finds no place at all, save only indirectly in the creation of the dictator. Publicity and criticism would fall to the Press and the B.B.C. In the interests of the State, publicity and the B.B.C. must require 'guidance'. Thus, if all M.P.s become Ministers, we



drift into inevitable Fascism under a dictatorship. That happened to some extent in England in the First World War; it progresses more quickly in this war, because the danger is greater. We know that if this country were invaded, all would have something to do and have no time or chance to criticize; we should 'bow to the wicked ten' and pray for their success. Pray also that, like Cincinnatus of old, they should go back to the plough willingly, directly their year of dictatorship was over. Neither Marius nor Sulla were legally 'dictators'. But Sulla was followed inevitably by Pompey, Caesar and Augustus.

We have no wish to see British democracy die, whether like the Roman or like the Weimar Republic. Yet we approach dictatorship more rapidly in this war than in the last. Let us observe carefully the difference, and as carefully how we can avoid the penalty and recover freedom.

#### JOINING THE SERVICES

The difference lies in this. In 1939, with the memory of 1914, more M.P.s leapt at once into salaried Government jobs; there was less hesitation, and more jobs, particularly civil jobs, available. Mr. Chamberlain, coached by the Civil Servants, who disliked the new competition, discouraged this jumping into jobs. He tried vainly to bar from parliamentary activity all who received commissions or appointments under the Crown not of a parliamentary character. This was, as it were, the dying protest of the War Office, resenting these junior officers talking direct to the Secretary of State, or expressing publicly views of which their superiors in rank might not approve.

By the time Churchill arrived in May 1940, the Army, Air Force, and Navy were replete with the younger M.P.s, introduced under the previous dispensation, and holding their commissions under the implications of silence and discipline. They had ceased to be Members of Parliament, except in name, yet (with a slightly guilty conscience) they were drawing two salaries and earning only one. The Churchillian fighting M.P. of 1914 had been almost instigated to take a larger view of his duties and functions. He was in Army or Navy to see for the Administration and to report fearlessly to Parliament, as well as to take the normal risk of the soldier. Being independent of a military career, he was in a better position to expose any weakness or blundering without personal risk than could be any regular officer dreaming of promotion.

Freddy Guest and Jack Seely, on the Commander-in-Chief's staff in France, were continually on the road between St. Omer and Westminster, between Commander-in-Chief and Prime Minister—used by both in their dual capacity as no one else could have been. Passchendaele would never have lasted out those awful months in the mud had two such M.P.s been also on Haig's staff in 1917; but dull resentment against all politicians was a prominent feature of Haig's character. French, on the other hand, had always been at one with political aristocrats in Churchill's 'Other Club'.

It was thanks largely to the Other Club and Churchill's buoyancy that the fighting M.P. of 1914 was asked in from on top, and not, as in 1939, pushed in from below. In 1914 he was welcomed with respectful awe as ambassador from the great; in 1939 he was regarded with suspicion as a competitor and a spy. That was and is due to the difference in self-confidence and social standing of those who made the infiltrations. What General could resist



his host recommending his bosom friend, 'who would keep him in touch with all that mattered in Whitehall'? What General and what mess would willingly receive a Mr. Tankerville Smith, 'who is quite a good fellow and wants a commission'? The former method was that of Churchill in 1914; the latter that of Chamberlain in 1939. No wonder that Lieut. Tankerville Smith, M.P., wondered whether the extra £300 a year was worth his exile among folk who disliked him at Sloccum-on-Sea.

#### WHAT M.P.S DID

One sees, of course, little of what the M.P. emissary in the Services does in any war—most must be done behind the scenes in private interviews with authority—and in setting a good example. But let me illustrate from the last war. Godfrey Collins cabled direct from Basra to the Secretary of State for India concerning the muddle in Mesopotamia, evading his military chiefs who were responsible. Aubrey Herbert coolly walked over to the Turkish lines in Gallipoli to have a chat with his friends, committing nobody to anything but establishing doubt as to German reliable friendship. 'Peter' Murray sat behind Lord Reading in our Embassy at Washington, doing personally all the tasks of publicity, propaganda, and press-contact which now occupy some hundred specialists in tact. Leo Amery, carrying despatches, concealed himself and them in a small sail locker, when the ship on which he was sailing the Mediterranean was searched by the Germans. But as against Amery's exploit must be set the sad disaster to Stanley Wilson. He threw overboard the code keys as the Germans approached, and behold, they floated and were hooked up out of the sea, to the infinite inconvenience of every Secret Service.

I have told<sup>1</sup> how Mark Sykes' knowledge of the Near East was used and abused by the Foreign Office; how Neil Primrose was sent out to govern Palestine and was slain in action at Gaza before reaching the Promised Land; how Francis Maclaren lent his Rolls-Royce unofficially to the General in Flanders on the understanding that he should be the chauffeur. Freddy Guest, with whom I served for a time in East Africa, sent weekly appreciations of the situation, alternately to Mr. Asquith and to his cousin Winston, put General Smuts into the Other Club and won adequately the D.S.O. and the post of Chief Whip. Jack Seely, evicted from the War Office as a result of the Curragh 'Mütiny', was even more successful. From French's A.D.C., he rose to command, as General of the Canadian Mounted Brigade, and in 1918 initiated with superb audacity the *Grand Pusch Foch* which drove the Germans back from Amiens. For this he won the famous silver cigarette-case, inscribed '*a l'ancien Ministre de Guerre, au brave de la Grande Guerre, au Général Seely, le Général Foch*', which he rightly prized above any decoration. Freddy Hicks-Beach died with Neil Primrose and his Yeomanry at Gaza; but Eddie Winterton survived to decorate Parliament for 40 years. 'Empire Jack' Norton-Griffiths scorched the Roumanian oil wells without authority, and losing his money rowed out alone into the Mediterranean to die. Jim Milner, taken desperately wounded, made the most epic effort to break prison; George Courthope of Rye, wounded in the head, commanding his last hundred Territorials, held the railway triangle at Givenchy by attacking and taking the German front-line trench, in order (as he said) to

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of a Fighting Life*. Hutchinson, 1940.

avoid annihilation from the German barrage on his own trench. 'Wedgy' Benn, preferring to fly over the Mediterranean, declined the post of Chief Whip and £2000 a year.

#### SETTING AN EXAMPLE

The reader will find none of these things in history ; but we who knew them know, and know also the secret. They ever had to set a good example, and never needed to wait for orders. On Gallipoli, young Cawley was safe on the Divisional Staff. His men were dying in the front-line trench ; so he resigned his staff appointment, went back to his men against orders and was killed next day.

So far those who went out from Parliament in this war have had less chance of adding military lustre to Parliament, though Arnold Wilson had the splendid curtain of death as a rear-gunner of Bomber Command. I am sure the example they have set both in the Services and in civil life has been every bit as good as that of their forerunners ; but they have not generally felt the same responsibility to Parliament or been in such close touch with the rulers. The Services have, as it were, inoculated them against 'telling tales out of school'. They have been absorbed into the Service ideas. Those who have instructed the Houses of Parliament have generally resigned from the Services first, so as to be free to report with frankness. Bellenger resigned his captaincy to tell the truth about the retreat to Dunkirk ; Sir Roger Keyes has twice resigned for freedom reasons, and achieved respect as well as affection ; Commander Bower felt obliged to resign when reproved for writing to the First Lord of the Admiralty, though that practice was certainly usual in the last war. Alexander, with all his good qualities, is not a Churchill, whom no Service Chief could ever awe or impress. Best, I think, has been Colonel Macnamara, who seems as indifferent to brass hats as he has been to the Party Whips. His criticism is always useful and constructive.

#### GENTLEMEN OF THE HOME GUARD

Unpaid service in the Home Guard has, of course, absorbed an even larger number of Members of both Houses than has the Army itself—sometimes as privates, sometimes as battalion commanders, and sometimes as Lord Lieutenants of Counties, used on this rare occasion to appoint the officers of the Home Guard in their own county. There being neither a vested interest to preserve nor misfortunes to conceal, the Home Guards are always vocal and generally well served in both Houses of Parliament. We might watch with more jealousy the conversion of the force into a branch of the Regular Army, and the excuse such embodiment provides for ceasing to consider the use and duty of the civilian population—men and women—not yet enrolled in the Guard. But at least it has made Parliament military-minded, and the night-watch has taught us the geography of Westminster. Indeed, the comradeship of the night-watch and fire-watch has extended our Parliament's democracy to all the officials, attendants, and the maintenance staff whom we never knew to exist before. The nightly round, the common task, has furnished all we ought to ask.

It is not, however, the Members who enter the fighting Services, paid or unpaid, that register our drift towards dictatorship. All such Members

frequently visit the House. So many were there present in uniform on that great night in May 1940, that they were chiefly responsible for ending the 'phoney war' and nominating Churchill for Prime Minister. The more dangerous innovation is the immense increase in civilian posts of profit under the Crown. The Ministers in the Commons now amount to 76, of whom two are women; and such Minister, even if only Assistant Postmaster-General, may immobilize another M.P. as his P.P.S. No doubt there is work for them all, but that work keeps them in Government offices and away from the comment and fellowship of the House. They shut out of their lives, more than in peacetime, all parliamentary work and all interests outside their own office. The atmosphere they breathe is that of the bureaucracy, not that of the critic. They have become automatons, voting for the Government of their chief.

#### DIVORCE FROM PARLIAMENT

Normally the desire for re-election and for the desirable advertisement of their activities would modify the M.P.'s divorce from politics—whether P.P.S. or back-bencher. They would be required to speak at least in their constituencies, and therefore to keep touch with general politics. The Party truce has had its effect on all of us, and must necessarily continue till the end of the war. We should, however, recognize that the closure of all political agitation in this war will probably injure the Labour Party just as it did the Liberal Party in the last war. Lifelessness always hits worst that Party which depends on argument and reason. No doubt fear of this fate for the Labour Party influences Mr. Morrison in continuing the suppression of the *Daily Worker*. "If we can't talk, no one shall", seems to be the argument—understandable, but not, I think, patriotic, so long as the Communists can confine their energies to getting 100 per cent efficiency in the workshops. In any case, we may expect more surprises at the next General Election than ever the freaks produced in 1918—the worst Parliament I have ever known.

Nor must I be understood to blame the P.P.S. fraternity for their divorce from politics and Parliament. It is good sobering training for statesmen; only it should not exclude too much. Nor have the best, by any means, deserted the House of Commons. Creech Jones, for instance, tirelessly continues his altruistic work for the coloured races, without any diminution of his service to his chief and sponsor, Ernest Bevin, at the Ministry of Labour.

Add together Ministers, P.P.S.s, Army, Navy and Air Force officers (including Public Relations Officers, as to whose business I am in some doubt), and you take away from the proper complement of Parliament quite half the Membership of the House of Commons.

#### NEED FOR 'KICKERS'

It is bad for democracy, bad for the House of Commons, bad even for the Government. Place-men are not merely dumb. "How oft the means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done." Ministers, even Prime Ministers, can get their cheers and their majority without the trouble of using reason; worse, they can support incompetent servants by scolding, instead of having the reasonable excuse for liquidation that 'the House won't stand it'. It is too often forgotten that an independent House is the best support for good administration, just because it makes it easier for Ministers to get rid of the

incompetent. If for that reason alone courage in 'kickers' should ever be encouraged by the Chair. The Government with an easy life leads ever a bad one. I doubt whether Mr. Churchill is the better for parliamentary unanimity; it closed, in something approaching disgrace, the careers of his three predecessors. Even if it be true that 'kickers' are usually wrong and often bores, yet the public benefits by hearing and understanding the reasons and arguments against their errors. Abuse is no answer to the public; silence shows not contempt, but stupidity.

Thus even in Parliament many of its democratic virtues go out of it in war. With a Prime Minister and Speaker alive to the losses, some might well be minimized. Members of Parliament of both Houses, especially in the Commons, where they receive salaries, might more often be induced to serve on many of the Civil Commissions, as they do on Public Accounts and National Expenditure Committees without extra pay. It is unseemly that Ambassadors and High Commissioners abroad should continue to draw their House of Commons salaries while absent in addition to their untaxed expenses. The question of double salaries to M.P.s in the Services was raised in Parliament in the last war, but was suppressed. I am ashamed to say I was one who drew both salaries, but I could hardly have complained had the House or the Prime Minister wished it otherwise. That is one certain method of reducing the number of place-men. It rests entirely with the Prime Minister, who does not himself draw double pay for his two offices. It would also reduce a certain jealousy of the lucky ones, and promote the feeling of brotherhood which is so good a feature of parliamentary war life.

The Speaker and Chairmen of Committees might minimize the loss to democracy, inevitable in war, if they allowed a little more latitude to individuals who are critical, but often unintelligible from nervousness. 'Rope' is always allowed to *Parties* against the Government—often to their own damnation. The same latitude, especially at Question time, might, with advantage to the critic and the criticized, be granted to individuals. That it would encourage criticism is not to be deplored in war-time; rather the reverse. Often the crank is a bore, but the House has its remedy: Members can walk out if they are not amused. True, the Speaker and the Minister on the bench can not, which is just hard luck!

#### SOLIDARITY OF SENTIMENT

Undoubtedly the pleasantest feature in Parliament at war is the new solidarity. All are affected in like manner by the news—good or bad. We are at once 'all members one with another'; old jealousies and animosities die a natural death under the new common anxiety. All, socialists and appeasers, are glad to be in this war now; we know now it was not to be avoided; we can't get out of it; we may have to go on for ever, but it is in good company whether to live or die. Probably we all have our own views for 'after the war'. But that hardly interests us, so remote does it sound, so inevitable the present.

That is where our new democracy comes in. Once upon a time there were in the House many very rich and many very poor. Between these two varieties of M.P.s there was always a sort of discomfort—one stood the drinks, and the other couldn't; one had his Rolls-Royce, the other walked to the bus—one lived in Grosvenor Square, the other in cheap lodgings in Pimlico. Of course they kept it decently concealed, but such disparity does

make it difficult to use the same spectacles. Nowadays, country houses are all let, London houses all bombed, and we live where we can on half our pre-war income. Our wives must manage without servants, and have all learnt to cook and to queue up for prunes or biscuits. Bomb stories are swapped with-gusto between the charlady and the countess. If 'there are no orphans in the Salvation Army', there are certainly no strangers and no class distinctions in the night-watch of the Home Guard—that great brotherhood of the stars.

Such considerations affect the whole nation, but the same equality and fraternity develops more fruitfully inside Parliament. There, a truer democracy than the old has developed—a happy sort of friendship and carelessness. Some have a job and some have not. What does it matter? We shall all start from scratch—after the war. Why? Long before the end of the war we may all be fed, clothed and housed by the State, and grateful for our meals. It is given to few to know the love of those who have gone together through the long valley of the shadow of death, and learnt to trust each other to the end. Personal ambition is beaten out under the hammer-strokes of a common fate, and the same hammer welds happier relationship and prouder duties.

#### UNDER THE HAMMER OF THOR

Such are the changes which war brings about in the relationship of Members of the House, and upon their efficiency in preserving the virtues of democracy. Less profound are the changes in the externals and procedure of the House. The absence of Party warfare outside has relieved our labours and our purse. Fresh problems have to be met in our minds and in our lives—always a pleasant and invigorating task. Bombed out and servantless, where shall we live? Churchill to be preserved, where and when shall the House meet? Inflation to fear, how shall we tax—and insure for the future? Back in the 7th century, how shall we save the good in civilization?

The bombing we have all solved in our own several ways. More live in London to avoid the discomfort of travel and to be on hand in emergency, but two rooms take the place of ten. We lunch in the House, even if we do nothing else there. While the *Blitz* was bad, we often met in that most uncomfortable secret house elsewhere, and still meet on days and at times which are never allowed to appear on the Order Paper. That is to prevent Churchill being selected by Hitler as 'target for today'. I remember one terrible afternoon with a raid at Question time, and Churchill sitting impassive waiting to speak, the whole world knowing that he was going to do so. "For God's sake, drop it and go!" I cried across the floor of the House. It made no difference then, but he did tell me in the lobby afterwards that it should not happen again, and that he had arranged for us to meet elsewhere—"but not out of London, mind".

#### WHERE PARLIAMENT MEETS

Our recent habit, since the burning of the Chamber in May 1941, has been to meet in the re-dressed spacious — The old Chamber has gone for ever, the scene of so many glories and humiliations. And a very good thing too! The Russians drinking the health of the Czar, then smashed the glass that no meaner toast might ever be drunk therefrom. So let the House of Com-

mons' Chamber be smashed that has seen the glories of the defence of London. That Chamber where Macaulay and Bright were heard, where Gladstone and Lloyd George were at home, where Churchill spoke amid the crash of bombs, should properly remain a tradition and a memory. I knew that House for fifty years, exactly half its lifetime, far better than any home, and I could have desired for it no finer curtain.

#### SECRET SESSIONS

The actual procedure and day-to-day work of Parliament remains much as before. There is no Standing Committee work, for all Government Bills are dealt with on the floor of the House in the absence of any professional opposition; and private Members' Bills have been suppressed for the duration. Members sit earlier in the day and rise earlier; there are more debates on many aspects of the war, mostly made on a motion 'that the House do now adjourn'. Some of these are now held in secret session, every Member being, not put on his honour, but subject to fine and imprisonment if ought leaks out through him. Such derogatory procedure was not employed in the last war. The Government, or a private Member, 'spied strangers' in the traditional manner, whereupon the galleries and the reporters were cleared out. That was good enough then; no information leaked, M.P.'s were trusted. Now with much drawing of curtains and guarding of doors an elaborate air of mystery is created; and the Ministers, in either case, tell you little or nothing that you did not know before.

Secret sessions are sheer waste of time, because no criticism is listened to and no promise recorded. No permanent officials are allowed to hear what is said; no Minister can say 'I will enquire'. One talks in a vacuum. The House could easily put an end to such farcical debates by all walking out directly the Minister sits down and refusing speech or comments in secret. Then open debate could take place on the adjournment.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

#### PREMIER'S POWER TO DISSOLVE

*"Government is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."*

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

#### THE THREAT OF DISSOLUTION

IN one respect I doubt the excellence of our British Constitution. The power to dissolve Parliament before its five-year term expires is given to the Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup> The President of the United States has no such power over Congress. Hardly one British Parliament in the last hundred years has lived out its allotted time.<sup>2</sup> Each time the Prime Minister has decided to dissolve, ostensibly to secure a Parliament more ready to support his Government.

<sup>1</sup> Of course it is the King who dissolves Parliament and summons a fresh one. But since the revolution the King has never done so save on the advice of his Prime Minister.

<sup>2</sup> Five years since 1918, previously seven years.

He secures in effect a plebiscite on his policy and acquires disciplined supporters.

For, if it were left to Parliament itself when to dissolve, it would never dissolve before its term legally expired. At a dissolution most Members risk losing their seat and certainly lose much money. All dislike intensely re-election, and for obvious reasons. So long as the Prime Minister has the power to put Members to this unpleasant experience he can frighten the House into supporting him, he can stop revolt in his Party, he can deprive debate and argument of any untoward result in the division lobby. He has only to say "I shall treat the vote as one of confidence", and fear of a dissolution does the rest. We should not have got rid of our last Prime Minister in May 1940 had he retained his power to dissolve Parliament. As Parliament could not be dissolved during the war, it was safe to vote against him.

Independents on the Government side, who dare to vote against their Party leader, risk more by a dissolution than all other Members. They are called rebels. At the following election, if they have defeated the Government, they cannot expect to be renominated by their Party in their old constituency. If the Government is defeated by their votes their Parliamentary career is generally closed. They may vote against their own Party Government when it is 'safe', *i.e.* when there is no risk of defeating the Government. But on a close vote of confidence, this power of the Prime Minister to dissolve ties his Party to him with bonds of iron. His mantle is thrown over every incompetent Minister, over any indefensible act of every Department. When all the weight of argument, all the sense of the House, is on the opposition side and against some Government blunder, the Opposition beg and beg in vain, that the 'whips may be taken off', that there may be a 'free' vote. The whips are not taken off. The worse the argument, the more they are needed. The utmost one can hope for is that Government supporters who have listened to the debate will abstain from voting.

This rigidity of Party discipline is due to the power to dissolve Parliament, a power which might perhaps be exercised if the Government were defeated. Nine times out of ten a Government defeat would not be followed by a dissolution, but the decision, the power, the whip, is always in the hands of the Prime Minister.

#### BUT THIS GIVES STABILITY.

This power is defended on the ground that it gives stability to British Government. "Look," they say, or used to say, "at France! Four fresh Governments a year! You never know where you are with the French." That is quite true. We may never know where we are with the ever-changing French Governments; but the French themselves do know quite well. They know that their Governments will accurately represent predominant feeling in the *Chambre* and country. French government might not be so stable, but it was more representative. Nor was it really unstable. The fresh Government changed a few Ministers, it moved slightly to the Right or Left, but any change of policy was gradual. True, there might be a new Foreign Minister, upsetting to our Foreign Office; but there was not a totally new administration with a totally new policy. A General Election in Britain may change a Conservative Government into a Socialist Government, or *vice versa*, with a sharp and sudden change of policy, far from



representing average opinion. Were it not for the fundamental moderation of British politics such changes would be devastating to any stability. As it actually is, policy changes little ; the bureaucracy see to that. Therefore I lay stress on the importance of correcting and educating the bureaucracy.

The French used to have a General Election every four years unless the Chamber and Senate decided for an earlier dissolution, which of course they never did. That necessarily involved frequent defeats of the Government, which in turn involved a coalition of Parties or groups in the Government to assure even a normal majority vote. For a moment the Popular Front gave a Government with a majority to the Parties of the Left, almost in British fashion. Immediately political feeling, accustomed to the aimless shuttle between Left Centre and Right Centre, burst into violent action which ended in the fall of France.

If the Popular Front Government had been able to go to the country on their policy in 1936, and had obtained backing for the Popular Front from the French people, two rival, responsible and comprehensive Parties would have been established. But they could *not* go to the country for approval. Therefore they did *not* frame a policy to win general approval ; but attempted to get the approval of each section of their own supporters. The Forty-Hours Week was the disastrous result of not having to face a General Electorate, but only a Party meeting.

The German system was in line with ours. The Chancellor could dissolve the Reichstag, just as the Prime Minister can here. He took, as it were, a series of plebiscites on Nazi-ism ; considering mainly the interests of his own Party in coming to his decision. The American system of partial elections every two years is completely independent of the President's will. But then Congress is purely a legislature without executive functions. Finally, local government everywhere is carried on with elections at fixed periods, and any idea of giving the chairman of a county council the power to dissolve his council would be greeted with hilarity.

#### DEMOCRACY *v.* AUTHORITY

Great Britain stands with defunct Germany and Spain in leaving the date and power of dissolution in the hands of the Prime Minister. This power our First Lord of the Treasury inherited from the Crown. The dissolution of 1783 was the last occasion on which the Crown dissolved Parliament against the wishes of the leaders of the majority of the House of Commons, and even then it was with the approval of the actual First Lord, William Pitt.

Let us all agree that this power does give the Prime Minister immense dictatorial power over Members of Parliament, that it checks the formation of small Parties and the independence of Members, that it replaces reason by force, that it is undemocratic. *Pro tanto*, the Prime Minister is not responsible to Parliament, but Parliament is responsible to him. He gets in this way for his Government a security of tenure, limited only by the legal date of dissolution.

Ministers say that a homogeneous Government, with a definite constructive policy, needs such security of tenure. It has not worked badly. Ministers have time to learn their job. It has not destroyed independence in Parliament. We do not want a number of small Parties. The alternative French system has ended disastrously. Government may not be so repre-



sentative of opinion or so democratic as in other countries ; but, with our immense responsibilities all over the world, ours is the happy mean between rash democracy and steady efficiency.

I contest all these points. I never knew a government with a definite constructive policy. They all live from hand to mouth guided by the expediency of the moment and often seeking means of avoiding the fulfilment of their election pledges. It has worked badly, especially since the diminution of Liberalism. The policy of deflation, so far as it was definite and constructive, nearly ruined the country. Our continuity of pro-French anti-Weimar foreign policy—followed, after 1933, by continuity of appeasement—has left us fighting for our bare lives. Many Ministers will agree with me that one is more efficient as a Minister when shifting from one Department to another than when getting stale among one lot of specialists. Ministers should be directors and not specialists, and able direction comes best from experience of many offices.

As for the effect on independence of Members, one need only enquire of any Member of long standing whither the last quarter of a century of Conservative and Labour Party discipline is taking us. On what else but the power of the Party machines does that discipline depend ? Is it creating 'yes-men' ? True, independence never vanished under Liberal governments or the old Party machines ; that was because they were instinctively democratic, and really believed in the power of reason as against force and intimidation.

Nor do I see any objection to a number of Parties, representing a number of opinions. There is nothing sacred in a two-Party system or a one-Party Government. There is something ridiculous about 615 rational beings queuing behind two inspired *credos* (though I am content to queue up behind one, so long as the Nazis are trying to cut my throat). When the Germans, French, Dutch, Danes, Norsemen were free they could choose their own political Party pen. But Britons, where non-conformity is in the blood, are to be told "you must be for or against Mr. Blank's government. Otherwise you are unfit for politics", our 'immense responsibilities all over the world' require independent thought, not the continuity of Mr. Blank in the Colonial Office.

Actually I see no advantage in leaving this weapon in the hands of Prime Ministers. They are powerful enough already, and power breeds abuse. The power of the Cabinet has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. There is no other way, save this, to diminish that power.

#### RESIGNATION OR RECONSTRUCTION

Observe what would happen if the Prime Minister could not dissolve Parliament. The Whips might still be put on, but M.P.s, dissatisfied, say, over sending Jewish refugees back to Hitler in the *Struma*, could safely vote against the Colonial Secretary knowing that Mr. Churchill would remain Prime Minister. True, he might resign ; but no one else could form a Government. Therefore he would form a new Government, changing at least his Colonial Minister. It would give him the excuse he might want for changing some others. That would be better democracy, and produce greater efficiency, as well as remove the slur on British history and traditions. Something similar might have happened over non-intervention in Spain, and over the fall of Prague. Even if the Government had not been defeated on these issues,

it would have framed its policy more in accord with public opinion so as to avoid the risk of defeat. Our whole foreign policy since 1922 would have been different if the House of Commons had had any hand in it at all. As it was, the House idly debated and registered approval under Government compulsion.

Note the wise words of George Washington with which I head this chapter: "Government is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master." Ever since 1914 this Master has been growing more fearful to a House of Commons which has failed in its primacy function, that of controlling the Executive. The fault lies not with any one man, but with the power given to one man. Moreover, that one man is, by the very possession of this power, deprived of knowing the feelings and wishes of the House. All the House can do is to tell the Chief Whip in private, and the Prime Minister has to rely more and more on what the Whips pass on to him. That is not democracy, but the Police State.

Annual Parliaments, as advocated by the Chartists—the only one of their seven points not already enacted—would have little advantage from this point of view, and many grave disadvantages. General Elections are fought on general issues, and Annual ones would not be fought at all in most of the constituencies. In any case no Members of Parliament would ever enact such a curse to themselves. Plebiscites or the Referendum would hamper government, confuse any issue, and be a costly irrelevancy. The Gallup Polls are a far better means of discovering public opinion, and have the merit of registering those who think they understand 'Yes' and 'No' in a separate category from those who admit they 'don't know'. A plebiscite leaves 'Don't-knows' to the most vigorous and best financed canvassers.

#### THE PRESS TO THE RESCUE

The Gallup Polls bring one naturally to the influence and position of the Press. The eclipse of Parliamentary influence over policy has left the criticism of Government policy ever more in the hands of the fourth estate. The very fact that broadcasting is now a Government monopoly, and completely colourless, has sharpened the critical faculties of all newspaper men. They note that publicity is left to them alone. Parliament in bondage, the air tainted, only the Press remains, and, on the whole, the newspapers have done their duty well. Newspaper editors have stood up to their proprietors much better than have Members of Parliament to their Government.

In the days of the old Liberal-Conservative shuttle, newspapers were Party propaganda organs. They did not need to think for themselves; they took the Party line as supplied by the high priests of their Party. Now, under 'stable' or one-party rule, adulation bores their readers and criticism has to be supplied. The Liberal Party may be dead, but no one can say that Liberalism is dead while the *Manchester Guardian* and *News Chronicle* survive. The *Evening Standard* is owned by Lord Beaverbrook; but its cartoons and leading articles are more influential than fifty Members of Parliament, and the presence of their proprietor in or out of the Government hardly appears to deflect the pen of David Low, Frank Owen or Michael Foot.

Indeed, the newspapers today, instead of attacking each other, have united in defending the freedom of one and all. As it were, they have found a new enemy and unite in attacking the bureaucracy. They usurp the duties

of Parliament dropped by nerveless hands. Redress of grievances has fallen into their columns. I cannot resent that they should be doing the work of Parliament; but we may all regret that they should have to do so. If one must choose between a free Press and a free Parliament, we may, on merits, prefer a free Press. But I see no reason why we should not have a free Parliament also, and remove from Members the fear of dissolution and the threats of Government Whips. Parliament must function if democracy is not to languish.

## CHAPTER SIX

## FOR AND AGAINST PLACE-MEN

*"If we had done as the kings told us, we should all have been slaves. If we had done as the priests told us, we should all have been idiots. If we had done as the doctors told us, we should all have been dead. We have been saved by disobedience. We have been saved by that splendid thing called independence, and I want to see more of it."*

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL, 1865.

## THE EXECUTIVE IN PARLIAMENT

POSSIBLY, in the previous chapters, I have been too harsh on place-men. They are essential to Parliament; had they not been there, we should not be here, and I have a sense of parentage to the whole breed. I discovered that Parliament in the 15th century was full of them, sitting for boroughs, cities and counties, exactly as their successors do today—'ambitious human leeches', or 'the heart and core of the Constitution'? At the top of the tree were the Treasurer and Controller of the Household, under the direction of the Lord Steward of the Household. They moved the Speaker to the Chair and assisted the Chair in managing business. The Speaker lodged in the Royal Palace as the guest of the Chamberlain of the Household. But besides them were endless King's Knights and Serjeants—and, for Weymouth-Regis or Totnes, there sat collectors of customs, tellers of the Exchequer, and escheators, *alias* extortioners, often nominated by Chancery or Treasury. They began coming in about the time of the Good Parliament (1376); they reached a maximum when they drowned Clarence in a butt of Malmsey wine (1478). Hotly competing with the squirearchy, they still subsist on Treasury briefs, or Agriculture and Fisheries, or the supervision of shelters, or refugees, or Empire migration, or Home Guards or Scottish forests. In old days they made a living out of Parliament; now they answer to Parliament for their activities—while still making that 'living' by the respectable vote of Parliament. But it is the same crowd, ever denounced by their fellow Members, ever useful and active—in fact the Executive in Parliament.

It was in the following manner that officials first came into and finally transformed Parliament. Members of Parliament were paid, and paid by their constituencies, 4s. a day for county members, 2s. a day for borough members—the equivalent of £8 and £4 a day in present money. It is not too much to say that these handsome 'expenses' did much to perpetuate Parliament. A trip to town at your fellows' expense has always been popular. The most important people wanted their annual trip to town, acquired a vested

interest in it ; and the King would not stand in the way of such a good old established custom. But the constituencies did not enjoy it, especially as sessions became longer and more expensive. Boroughs began to refuse to elect anyone ; they made no returns to the sheriff, pleading poverty. Quite half the boroughs dropped out altogether by 1435.

Those that continued to send up 'burgesses resident' suddenly found many who were not resident quite willing to pose as 'resident' and go to Parliament without pay. These carpet-baggers—Crown officials, budding lawyers, younger sons of the squirearchy—came to Parliament from boroughs they had often never seen. Dozens of boroughs belonged to the Crown, like Melcombe Regis, or to the Duchy of Cornwall, which was a Crown fief ; and for many of these the 'return' was filled up at the Chancery with Treasury or Chancery nominees. By 1441 23 out of 259 identified M.P.s were carpet-baggers and 54 officials ; by 1491 42 out of 278 identified M.P.s were carpet-baggers and 62 were officials ; and some of great importance, such as Sir Thomas Lovell, Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Sir John Riseley, Steward of the Duchy ; Sir Richard Guildford, Master of the Ordinance ; Richard Empson and John Dudley ; and Robert Lytton, Under-Treasurer of England.

Besides the desire of lesser men to get to the Court, high officials found it desirable to have a seat in Parliament.

#### DRIVEN OUT BY HIGH LOOKS

Originally Parliament, that Parliament which became the House of Lords, was a 'Court' held in the King's House at Westminster. The Judges, the other King's Servants, and such magnates civil or spiritual as he (or the Chancery) chose to summon to consultation, came to the King's High Court. After 1264,<sup>1</sup> when the Commons were first summoned, the summons to the Upper House (to the King's Court) began to be regularized : all the Judges, Bishops, many Abbots and the heads of the great feudal houses were summoned to attend. The King's Servants, the officials of his household, did not get special writs of summons ; they were on the spot, at home. At home—but not for long. The barons summoned by writ, valuing their privilege, began to look askance at the Controller of the Household, asking : "Who is he, that he should sit among us ?" The King's Attorney was met with 'high looks'. By 1450 all such officials who had no independent right to be there as Bishop or Baron had been cold-shouldered out of the House of Lords, and the Judges had been reduced to the silence of 'speak when your opinion is asked'. So, cold-shouldered from the Lords, the high officials began to take seats in the Common House, to sit on the benches near the Speaker while others stood, to advise the Speaker on the conduct of business, to form in fact the germ of the present Cabinet. Any constituency was proud to return them ; they demanded no pay, but dispensed instead favour and patronage.

So, by 1450, we begin to find that notable and unique feature of British Democracy—the Executive in Parliament—in the Lords and in the Commons. They held places at Court ; they were place-men—and so was the 'keeper of the coney on the lawn at Clarendon', or 'the keeper of the water of Fosse by York'.

Gradually the minor place-men failed to survive the competition or reach the House of Commons. The desire of the gentry and the lawyers for seats

<sup>1</sup> Summoned by writs issued in Nov. 1264 to meet 21 Jan., 1265.

in the Commons led them to offer not merely to serve for nothing, but to entertain the electors; and in that the keeper of the coneyes could no longer compete. The servants of my Lord of Stafford ceased to be good enough, and my Lord's sons were elected instead—for such 'boroughs' as Bletchingley in Surrey, owned by the Earl of Stafford, and known now, only, as the hamlet which once returned two Members to Parliament.

#### COURT AND COUNTRY

Therefore by 1600 the Executive was firmly fixed and permanently in Parliament—in one House or the other—as was the King himself. It was Henry VIII who used and magnified a Parliament of landowners. In Stuart times the all-powerful squirearchy began to contest power with the Crown and Ministers. Parties become 'Court' or 'Country'. The place-men were all 'Court'; the squires all 'Country'—'country-bumpkins' in the Courtiers', and 'jackanapes' in the squires' language. We begin to find Committees of the House, and Chairmen of those Committees, becoming leaders of opposition to the Court. We might have slid into the French system of government by Committees with *rapporteurs* had not Civil War ended in the domination by the Crown with its swarms of 'pensioners'.

For the place-men had come back again in fresh guise. The Court Party were recipients of grants of monopolies as well as posts at Court. They got Regiments and employed a Lieutenant, or they got just simply pensions, so long as they were 'good'. After all, were not the King and his Ministers in receipt of pensions from the French King? The 1661-78 Parliament is known as the 'Pensioners' Parliament', and was naturally the longest-lived Parliament in our history.

The appellation 'Lieutenant' (*lieu-tenant*—place-holder) had acquired too military a sound. It only survives civilly in our Lord-Lieutenant of a County. In lieu thereof, the blessed word 'deputy' arrived, and the 18th-century Parliament flourished on deputies. A man might be appointed Governor of Carolina, and take the pay, but he appointed a deputy to do the work; or he was made Secretary to the Barbados, appointed a deputy and never knew where the islands were! A post carrying a high fee, such as Clerk of the Pells, was granted in reversion four deep, and the lucky holder employed someone else to write on skins. A Teller-ship of the Exchequer was worth £8000 a year, and was 'in the gift' of the First Lord of the Treasury, whom we now call Prime Minister. There were no duties attached thereto, but a seat in the House improved one's chances of 'landing the big fish'.

#### AN OFFICE OF PROFIT UNDER THE CROWN

Naturally the country squires tried to stop the growth of these perquisites to others, so did the constituencies which had elected (as they hoped) honest men. Party strife was exceptionally virulent during the reign of Queen Anne. Whigs and Tories gave no quarter. Every possible borough election was contested, most returns were petitioned against. One can imagine the indignation of Lichfield, after electing a Chetwynd of Tory principles, at finding him accepting a comfortable office (perhaps for life) from the Whig Government. Of course they could turn him out of his seat in three years' time, but meanwhile he was a 'rat', a 'renegade', a 'traitor'. The Parliament of landed squires got so far as to pass an Act of Parliament which compelled

anyone who received an office of profit under the Crown to resign his seat at once. He might, however, stand for re-election. That Act, to my disgust and in spite of my opposition, has recently been whittled away, so that an unpopular Government can now make a more unpopular appointment without having to select a man with a safe seat. If our hungry horde of present place-men had been obliged to face a by-election there would be far fewer of them, and there would be more men serving without profit. I need hardly say that careful definition of what exactly was an 'office of profit under the Crown' enabled an increasing number of beneficiaries to slip through without a by-election. It was then that Sir Robert Walpole did *not* declare 'Every man has his price', and the Duke of Newcastle, acting on that principle, managed to control the House of Commons.

#### AMERICA TAKES A HAND

Such were the place-men of the 18th century, whose existence created the war with America, and whose destruction (on Dunning's Motion in 1779) ended Lord North's government and finally the war with America. Unfortunately, to the eternal sorrow of all succeeding ages, fear of these place-men induced the Fathers of the American Constitution to separate for ever the Executive from the Legislature in Congress.

Dunning's Motion and sixty years of subsequent legislation, and finally the great Reform Bill in 1832, put an end to the scandal of the place-men. The sinecures and pocket-boroughs vanished with them. These may be coming back in different guise, but now, with live constituencies to correct yes-men and suppress the noddies, if they should come back we can look after them. Our Constitution is what we choose to make it. But for all time, so far as I can see, the United States of America, with a written Constitution, are committed to a fatal divorce of the Executive from the Legislature, based entirely on a misconception of Parliament and dislike of the temporary 18th-century blemish.

#### CONTRACTORS WITH GOVERNMENT

However, we have had a very dusty type of place-men, and may get them again. Let us balance up. What should we lose if suchlike were excluded from Parliament? Already all who have contracts to supply Government with goods are definitely excluded by heavy penalties from sitting in the House of Commons. That prohibition is a legacy of 18th-century corruption, and a stupid inconvenience today which is continually involving us in personal Indemnity Bills. If Messrs. Josiah Wedgwood and Sons, Ltd., sell mugs to a Government canteen, all is fair, though I be a director<sup>1</sup>; but if instead of being a director of a company I were a partner of a firm, the 'common informer' could convert me into his private gold-mine. It will probably occur to most good democrats that as there must be Government contractors, it would be better to have them where you can see them, and to keep them in good company.

As I am not in favour of excluding directors or shareholders in companies 'which have dealings with the State', I am not in favour of excluding individuals who have such dealings. Still less do I favour excluding the Fighting Officers, or H.M. Ambassador to Moscow, or the Prime Minister, or the

<sup>1</sup> I am not, and never have been.

Governor of the Bank of England, or the Financial Secretary to the War Office. I see no real advantage in excluding from the House of Commons clergymen of the Church of England. We might humanize them, and they might spiritualize us.<sup>1</sup>

In fact place-men are what the public make them. If it is 'good form' to swindle and sell your vote and get something for nothing, one can always turn English gentlemen into the 18th-century type of place-men. If it is 'bad form', one gets the scrupulous honour of Victorian days in which it was my privilege to be born. In any case, it is better to have them on the benches beside one rather than nosing around Government offices in the dark. The Prime Minister would not inspire me with more confidence if he were never allowed to speak to a Member of Parliament, lest he might be influencing his vote. That, I gather, is the length to which this fetish of separation of the Executive from the Legislature has gone in America. "He has been hanging about the Lobbies" is the heaviest crime that can be charged against an American Secretary of State. While in England we do so wish that Churchill or Eden would spend more time in the Smoking-Room, and vainly we ask them to come to dinner.

#### THE HAPPY MEAN IS IN CONSTANT DANGER

Without the Executive in Parliament there would be little power for M.P.s, little interest in a political career, and no training or selection of the right men to rule. With too many of the Executive in Parliament, ruling would be too easy, Government too powerful, opposition impotent and democracy would vanish. By a lucky accident the British system has struck a happy mean; but the balance is constantly in danger of being upset in the direction of the Executive. Just as the instinctive desire of every individual M.P. is to hold office—for power, patronage, or salary—so the instinctive desire of every House of Commons is to perpetuate itself and avoid the costs and risks of re-election. Responsibility is pleasanter than representation, for the patron in Parliament becomes the petitioner on the hustings.

The Long Parliament (1640-53) of revered memory became full of place-men or beneficiaries, excluded more and more of its enemies, and ended as a Rump of 'Kinglets' only to be dissolved by force. The Pensioner Parliament (1661-1678) was full of pensioners determined to retain their seats and benefice. In both cases public opinion in the country, which had been more and more abandoned and neglected, was roused to furious demands for dissolution and a 'free' Parliament.

Almost the first act of the country gentlemen's 'glorious revolution' of 1688 was to insist on triennial Parliaments, so that no House of Commons should escape from its electors for a longer time, or again flout them and become 'Jacks in office'. With the Hanoverian Whigs once firmly in the saddle (1714), they pulled over the lever the other way, and passed the Septennial Act, which changed three into seven years of safety. It was their most unpopular Act, denounced and suspect by electors, not only because of the wrong wrought to democracy—the trusty electors' pockets suffered also if those exciting and remunerative elections were to be held only once in seven years. After the great Reform Bill, Parliaments tended to shorten,

<sup>1</sup> The Select Committee on Offices of Profit, 1941 (par. 61), reported: "It seems probable that the Church of England would strongly oppose the removal of the disqualification." So much the worse for the Church of England, if true. But that is probably the mere wishful thinking of a Tory escapist.



by the wish of the Press or the Prime Minister ; for the Press likes elections, and a Prime Minister's threat to dissolve must sometimes be followed by action. Moreover, one of the seven points of the People's Charter (1845) was Annual Parliamentary Elections, so that having to face the electors might steady the grip of democracy upon the place-man's collar.

The contest has ever been between 'a free Parliament' and entrenched rulers with a vested interest in retaining their seats ; or between 'Country' and Court ; or between 'demos' and 'place-men' ; or, indeed, between the Gallup Poll and Fascism. Members of Parliament tried to keep their speeches secret ; they tried to keep their voting secret. Winkles could not have been more reluctant to leave their shell ! Even so did politicians acquire their reputation in the Fascist Press. 'Place-men *v.* Parliament' takes its natural part in the eternal match between Authority and Freedom. Mussolini's Rome has all authority and no freedom ; the U.S. Congress has no authority and all freedom ; our Parliament moves serenely between—with the Executive encased in a free Parliament ever under the prospect of dissolution.

But with respectful deference to Mr. Churchill, I venture to think that our present Parliament is getting too far from the people, and too full of executive place-men.

#### CHECK BY THE PRESS

Fortunately there is still a free Press. From Milton and the pasquinades, by way of the *Spectator* and the *North Briton*, by pamphleteers and poets, by the *Manchester Guardian* and even the Beaverbrook Press, Parliament has been kept straight, place-men kept in their place ; and the people have learnt to control themselves in the continued enjoyment of liberty. It is not lightly that we speak of the watchdogs of the Press.

It may be that I have overstressed the identity of place-men and Executive. Certainly in a House where quite one third of the Members hold offices of profit under the Crown (quite one half, if we include the cohorts of the P.P.S.), a good many of these place-men have but a nodding acquaintance with real power. The Executive that counts is the Cabinet, to which all subordinate Ministers and Under-Secretaries tend to become 'noddies' without influence on policy. These minor place-men have grown in numbers more rapidly than the Cabinet ; and the Cabinet itself has two grades of Executive—those in and those not in the War Cabinet.

This great growth in the number of Junior Ministers, who are little in the public eye, rarely speak in Parliament and consider themselves lucky if given a Question to answer, needs watching. More particularly do they need watching when one Party is continuously in power. They continue indefinitely in their particular office ; they are forgotten, and tend to forget that they are Members of Parliament ; they tend to think of themselves as part of the bureaucracy they were deputed to control. I frequently greet old friends, saying how glad I am to see them back in the House, only to discover that for the last half-dozen years they have been Parliamentary Secretary to the Transport or Pensions Minister. It is most embarrassing.

#### A PURGE WANTED

Unfortunately, with the growing functions of the State fresh Ministries become inevitable, or at least possible. If we want to restore Parliament as



a responsible body, a purge is needed. Perhaps in all cases where the Minister is not a Secretary of State, the nodding Under-Secretary might be restored to his proper duties on the back benches; otherwise a considerable section of the gentlemen of the House of Commons will soon be, for all practical purposes, in the Civil Service. I should like a resolution of the House, similar to Dunning's Motion: that not more than forty Members of the House of Commons or ten Members of the House of Lords should hold paid appointments under the Crown. There would still be plenty of candidates for unpaid offices which lead to higher things. But this curtailment of patronage would, as always, be resisted by the patrons. They do not want 'noddies' and 'yes-men', but they do like to throw (substantial) crumbs to their friends. Really titles would be cheaper and as captivating. The number of Ministerial office holders in the Commons in July 1914, was 36; in July 1939, 47; in May 1941, 70!

I give below a complete list of the offices of profit of a ministerial character held by Members of Parliament today and in 1905 under a less expansive and expensive Government. The growth cannot but astonish the student, alarm the economist, and grieve the philosopher.

## MINISTERS IN 1905 AND 1942

	1942 £	1905 £
<i>Treasury :</i>		
Prime Minister . . . . .	10,000	5,000
Chancellor of the Exchequer . . . . .	5,000	5,000
Financial Secretary to the Treasury . . . . .	2,000	2,000
Patronage Secretary to the Treasury (National) . . . . .	3,000	2,000
Patronage Secretary to the Treasury (Labour) . . . . .	3,000	—
Treasurer of the Household . . . . .	1,000	1,000
Comptroller of the Household . . . . .	1,000	1,000
Vice-Chamberlain of Household . . . . .	1,000	1,000
Captain of the Gentlemen at Arms (L) . . . . .	1,000	—
<i>Chancery :</i>		
Lord Chancellor (L) . . . . .	10,000	10,000
Attorney-General . . . . .	13,000	13,000
Solicitor-General . . . . .	10,000	10,000
Lord President of the Council . . . . .	5,000	2,000
Lord Privy Seal . . . . .	5,000	—
<i>Foreign Office :</i>		
Secretary of State . . . . .	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	1,500
<i>Home Office :</i>		
Secretary of State . . . . .	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	1,500
Security Secretaries (two) . . . . .	3,000	—
<i>Navy :</i>		
First Lord of the Admiralty . . . . .	5,000	4,500
Parliamentary Financial Secretary (L) . . . . .	1,500	2,000
Civil Lord of the Admiralty . . . . .	1,500	1,000
<i>Army :</i>		
Secretary of State . . . . .	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary (L) (Lords) . . . . .	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Commons) . . . . .	1,500	1,500
Financial Secretary to War Office . . . . .	1,500	1,500
<i>Air :</i>		
Secretary of State . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Under-Secretary (L) (Lords) . . . . .	1,500	—
Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Commons) . . . . .	1,500	—

	1942 £	1905 £
<i>Colonial Office :</i>		
Secretary of State (L) . . . . .	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	1,500
<i>Dominions Office :</i>		
Secretary of State . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>India Office :</i>		
Secretary of State . . . . .	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary (L) . . . . .	1,500	1,500
<i>Scottish Office :</i>		
Secretary of State . . . . .	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Labour) . . . . .	1,500	—
Lord Advocate . . . . .	5,000	5,000
Solicitor-General for Scotland . . . . .	2,000	2,000
<i>Irish Office (now extinct) :</i>		
Lord Chancellor . . . . .	—	8,000
Chief Secretary . . . . .	—	5,000
Attorney-General for Ireland . . . . .	—	5,000
Solicitor-General for Ireland . . . . .	—	2,000
<i>Board of Trade :</i>		
President of the Board . . . . .	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	1,200
Minister, Overseas Trade . . . . .	2,000	—
<i>Ministry of Fuel and Power :</i>		
Minister . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary, Mines . . . . .	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary, Petroleum . . . . .	2,000	—
<i>Health :</i>		
The Minister for Health . . . . .	5,000	2,000 <sup>1</sup>
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	1,200
<i>Agriculture :</i>		
President of the Board . . . . .	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>Education :</i>		
President of the Board . . . . .	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	1,200
<i>Labour :</i>		
The Minister for Labour . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Labour) . . . . .	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Conservative) . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>Supply :</i>		
Minister for Supplies . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Lords) . . . . .	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Commons) . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>Information :</i>		
Minister for Information . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>War Transport :</i>		
Minister (L) . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (America) . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>Works and Planning :</i>		
Minister (L) . . . . .	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretaries (two) . . . . .	{ 1,500 1,500	—
<i>Ministry of Food :</i>		
Minister (L) . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>Economic Warfare :</i>		
Minister (L) . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—

<sup>1</sup> Then "President of the Local Government Board".

	1942 £	1905 £
<i>Aircraft Production :</i>		
Minister . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>Production :</i>		
Minister . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,500	—
<i>Paymaster-General :</i>		
(Reconstruction) . . . . .	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	2,000	—
<i>Pensions :</i>		
Minister . . . . .	2,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary . . . . .	1,200	—
<i>Post Office :</i>		
Postmaster-General . . . . .	3,000	2,500
Assistant Postmaster-General . . . . .	1,200	—
<i>Duchy of Lancaster :</i>		
Chancellor . . . . .	2,000	2,000

Of the above eighty Ministers, eleven sit in the Lords. But most have parliamentary private secretaries who usually vote according to custom and abstain from criticism whether in Parliament or outside. Besides the eighty parliamentary offices, the Chairman of the Public Assistance Board at £5000 a year sits in the Upper House.

#### NON-PARLIAMENTARY APPOINTMENTS

Even this formidable list by no means exhausts the far-flung ambitions of the new Servants. Governorships of the three Presidency Provinces of India—Bengal and Bombay and Madras—as well as Governorships, when desired, of the Seychelle Islands and St. Helena, or well-paid sinecures, such as a directorship of the Suez Canal, used to be in the nature of parliamentary perquisites. But an M.P. accepting such paid posts had to retire from Parliament. That retirement has no longer been found necessary in the case of certain Ambassadors and others who continue in most cases to draw double salaries. Besides those above mentioned, the Prime Minister has certified that the following offices of profit of a non-ministerial character may be held in conjunction with a seat in the House of Commons: Mr. MacDonald, High Commissioner, Canada, £2500; Mr. Cross, High Commissioner, Australia, £2500; Sir Peter Bennett, Chairman, Automatic Gun Board ("nil"); Mr. Spens, Chairman, National Vegetable Marketing Board, £1250 (now lapsed); Prof. A. V. Hill, Member of Ordnance Board, fees not exceeding £600 a year; Mr. Summers, Controller, Ministry of Supply ("nil"); Col. Sir Walter Smiles, Ministry of Aircraft Production ("nil"); Mr. Hewlett, Dye-stuffs Controller, Board of Trade ("nil"); Mr. Wakefield, Director of the Air Training Corps ("nil"); Comdr. Stephen King-Hall, Adviser, Ministry of Aircraft Production ("nil"); General Spears, Minister to the Republics of Syria, £2000; Lord Burghley, Controller of American Supplies ("nil"); Robert Morrison, Chairman, Waste Food Board ("nil"); Sir Ian Fraser, Governor, B.B.C., £1000; Hon. H. G. Nicolson, Governor, B.B.C., £1000. The same is now true of various Members of either House of Parliament who are Civil Regional Commissioners, with staffs or Deputies also drawn from Parliament and holding nominal office in one of the Fighting Services.

I would call attention here to the pleasing fact that the Labour M.P.s in these posts—Tom Johnstone, John Lawson, Robert Morrison and Robert

Richards—all decline to take any salary, remaining content with their Parliamentary £600 a year. Conscience on the matter of public salaries has grown somewhat apathetic under the influence of war and an uncertain future.

In the last war many M.P.s were given commissions in the Fighting Services and employed and paid as King's Messengers, travelling widely with despatches and ciphers. This practice has not been followed in the present war; but there are other commissions, now given for non-fighting work—*i.e.* liaisons, public relations, for which M.P.s are certainly well fitted, but which, according to old-fashioned ideas, should not draw double salaries.

All these add some thirty to our list of the paid Executive; and in addition there are at least fifty more M.P.s definitely with the fighting Services in the field, in the air or on the seas, setting a fine example, but withdrawn from Parliament in varying degree. Cartland, slain at Ypres, refusing to surrender, certainly carried out to the end the finest traditions of Parliament at war.<sup>1</sup>

In view of this large number of new paid public servants, many of them in new offices without tradition or practice to guide, a word should be said to illuminate a present virtue and eliminate danger of future reproach. Members of Parliament who cannot afford private secretaries or private motor-cars—and that is a large majority in war-time—may slip too easily into using the officially provided convenience for constituency work, and thence further for private affairs. This is a dangerous example to set, and even more dangerous to the Minister M.P. who errs. Everybody is watching them; they are sure to be denounced. So let me state the view of the virtuous, or the old-fashioned.

The use of Government paid secretaries as private secretaries is regarded as inadmissible in the Treasury and as 'bad form' by the young gentlemen in the other Departments. But it is not possible to resist a constituency grievance tossed across the table with a "You might ask your opposite number at the Home Office to let me know about this." Junior Ministers had better avoid even that; but the bitterest complaints arose when the wife of one Minister thought *she* had acquired an A.D.C. and a secretary with her husband's seals of office. Perhaps that is why he lost the seals; for a whisper to the mysterious 'head of the Civil Service' would at once produce a rebuke from the Prime Minister. An accusation of meanness is quite as much dreaded in certain circles as a charge of misappropriation.

Official secretaries and official motor-cars seem inextricably confused with the private and the personal in the minds of the less scrupulous. There was the terrible case of the official car found waiting for a Minister outside a quite doubtful house in Paris during the Peace negotiations; and, only last year, a Junior Minister's career rocked when his wife and child were observed to be brought up from the country to the pictures in his official car. In my opinion he would have gone had not some blame rested on the Treasury for not having previously made a point of honour clear.

However, to sum up this vexed question of place-men in Parliament, let us be clear that, so far as we ensure the Executive being present in Parliament, such officials in Parliament vulgarly described as place-men are an essential, valuable element in British democracy. The combination trains the M.P. to rule, provides an honourable and useful career in politics which attracts the best class of people to altruistic work, and it provides the best

<sup>1</sup> Likewise Sir John Savage, M.P., was slain at Boulogne, refusing to surrender, in 1491.

democratic control of the growing bureaucracy. On the other hand, an excessive growth of place-men injures the responsible and representative character of the House of Commons, makes a political career selfish and mercenary, merges the M.P. in the bureaucracy, and gives good ground for (often) exaggerated reproach to the enemies of Parliamentary rule. The pendulum in these days has swung too far in the direction of place-men and Government, and needs to be reversed in the interest of democracy and freedom.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF BUREAUCRACY

*"The safety-valve to alleviate discontent is the right to expound ideas, advocate Government reform, and to criticize public officials."*

GOV. W. P. HUNT, OF ARIZONA, 1900.

In the last chapter we traced a danger to democracy through the inordinate growth of paid officials sitting in Parliament—the overwhelming of the critics by those to be criticized, the strengthening of Government against those governed. This endangers the first function of Parliament which, from its very inception, has been the Redress of Grievances against Government. Redress had always to precede the voting of money to Government.

#### REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES

The grievances of the electors cannot be redressed unless the Member of Parliament is independent of the Government against which the grievance lies. Moreover, the grievances of the common people will not be redressed unless they are electors. The Courts are open to all who have grievances; but the laws which the Courts must carry out are the laws permitted by those who represent electors. This is the final and conclusive argument for that adult suffrage which most democratic countries enjoyed while their democracy survived.

But to go to law is always an expensive, uncertain and slow method of redressing a grievance—and beyond the means of most victims. Therefore grievances against Government injustice have generally taken the form of petitions to Parliament. In modern times the collective petition became no special person's baby and often got abandoned in the black bag behind the Speaker's chair. Therefore electors tend more and more to seek a remedy by writing to their M.P., who in turn seeks a remedy from the Minister concerned for the 'sore grief' of his petitioner.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

The Minister concerned sits in Parliament—among those who seek a remedy from him. He also sits supreme in his office, directing his bureau, and potentially feared by his bureaucracy. The Member of Parliament, by open question to the Minister, can direct the limelight of publicity upon any ill-deed done to his elector (or anyone else) by the Minister's subordinate officials.

In the eyes of his fellow Members, the Minister is himself responsible for the ill-deeds of his subordinates. The Minister must defend his subordinate's action ; but the subordinate must defend the Minister by making out a good case for the latter to present to the House. Woe to the official who cannot make out a case to satisfy his master, who suppresses any of the facts, who meets an angry chief back from his daily heckling and hears : "Of course, they have moved the adjournment on me ! Really, you will have to do something about . . ." Then the whole office has a black day, and perhaps justice is satisfied ; and the elector goes away rejoicing—or more usually does not.

It is rarely necessary to pursue Ministers into the limelight. For every grievance raised at Question time or in open debate, a dozen such are dealt with in private correspondence. Each complaint is duly sent on by the M.P. to the appropriate Minister. Redress, or an explanation why there is no redress, comes back to the Member. He can then decide if anything more could usefully be done. Generally the M.P. forwards the official explanation with a covering note of affectionate apology for not having achieved justice 'against the tangle of red tape rules in which unfortunate officials are tied'. We endeavour to be soothing to our electors ; the Minister endeavours to be soothing to us ! None of us wishes for trouble, publicity, or recrimination. Some are, of course, haunted by the love of justice *per se*, or hatred of the State regulations and all that injustice which is 'justified' by expediency ; but these are the cranks.

#### PUBLICITY SECURES REDRESS

However, we receive (and pass on) all these civil answers, because in default of civility we can 'raise the matter' in the House ! It is that power which keeps the officials civil, and persuades the Minister to put his arm round you in the Lobby to remonstrate and explain. In a rough and ready way, I can think of no better method of securing the redress of grievances than this. Grievances not only of electors, but of the whole world, can be given skilful publicity. The victim of injustice has the balm of feeling that his last cry is heard, if not answered. I can look back on thousands to whom I have given sympathy, sometimes hope, and more rarely redress. Nor do I believe that the Members of any other Senate or Assembly in the world have such opportunities for benevolence, or such a chance to influence public opinion in moral (or immoral) direction.

In the long run, it is not the Minister or the law which moves the bureaucracy—or that section of the bureaucracy which sits on the judicial bench—so much as public opinion. All men tend to do that which they know is expected of them. How can they tell what is expected, save from public opinion ? A free Parliament and a free Press guide public opinion, and influence every cog in the machine of government. So does a Führer ! But the direction of the guidance of a Führer, whether Church or State leader, must ever be towards the deification of his Church or State. He must justify his machine, his servants.

While Parliament, yoked in publicity with the Press, acts as a good check upon the natural vices of bureaucrats, rendering them nervous of committing a 'gaffe', let us not forget that this very nervousness breeds in officials reluctance to take any steps at all. The Civil Services are at one with the Fighting Services in their extreme reluctance to take responsibility

and their passion for awaiting orders. Official files multiply, not because officials like writing but because they hate deciding. Any decision may lay the man who takes that decision open to censure in Parliament. Therefore every decision is postponed and the file goes back from the front line—back, perhaps even to the Minister himself. The Minister requires more information before he decides on what is to him a new point. Then the file reverses slowly, from hand to hand again, to the man on the spot who dares to make what he wants a little clearer; and so the shuttlecock goes on—each avoiding responsibility for fear of ‘a cursing’. That the whole Office is abused for red tape is of less importance to me than if I am found fault with. The fear of a cursing extends, of course, to the Minister himself if he is afraid of the Prime Minister, and whether a hundred Jewish refugees should be allowed to land in Palestine becomes a Cabinet Question on which the Prime Minister will be asked to waste his time.

#### GOOD AND BAD MINISTERS

The cure is to have Ministers who will curse not those who take decisions but those who do not—an easy course to pursue if he is a man of courage himself. The worst type of Minister is he who, as it were, joins the servants’ hall against the master. Such Ministers are intimate with their officials and nervous of their colleagues in the House. They have conspired against Parliament, and thenceforth their servants have them at a disadvantage.

No Minister would allow his officials to attack his Cabinet colleagues in his presence. That is easy; officials would hardly dare to do so, however intimate. But it is almost as bad a lapse from good form to allow officials to attack the honesty or intelligence of a critic in the House. What one may say to one’s P.P.S. (or listen to from him) is fatal to discipline if permitted to an official private secretary. From that lapse, further steps downward become easy. Next, the Minister consults as to the *safest* presentation of ‘their’ case, conceals facts from the House, and ends by lying to the Prime Minister. Such is ‘the rake’s progress’, ending in ignominious retirement.

The good Minister must ever say to his officers, “I want to be quite certain myself that there is nothing in that grievance. I will have no hushing up for the honour of the service; that honour depends on honesty, publicity, reason, not on professional solidarity with black sheep.” Moreover, the black sheep are not those who make mistakes, but those who avoid action for fear of making them.

This homily is, of course, applicable also to the Fighting Services. I might remind their successors that the actions of Cromwell, Hawke or Nelson were never devitalized by fear of censure.

#### WHAT REMEDY UNDER DICTATORS?

I am at a loss to imagine how bureaucrats can be kept in check in autocratic lands. Professional solidarity must extend to the very highest regions. What can prevent jobbery, nepotism, and the bullying of the subject when there is neither free Press nor free Parliament? Officials may leave school as devoted servants of the State, but they must end by considering themselves to be the State. One has only to contemplate the fear of our police evinced by ‘refugees from Nazi oppression’ (*alias* Jews) to realize the complete lack in many Continental countries of any method of remedying grievances

against the State. Abject submission, tempered by blackmail, was the normal lot of all mankind, from the time of Pericles to the time of Cromwell. The virtue of the Christian Church was that it grafted on to such slavery the doctrines of humanity and mercy. "But Christianity," said Clemenceau, "which began by being the refuge of the poor, has ended by becoming the Trade Union of the rich." For all rebels—Jews, Communists, heretics—outside English-speaking lands there has long been no remedy for grievances—only prostrate submission to a one-eyed Polyphemus or to the Briareus of bureaucracy.

#### POLICE

Of all bureaucracy's hundred arms, the police are the most dreaded, the most difficult to control, the cause of most grievances unremedied. It is amazing to think that only one hundred years ago Sir Robert Peel started our model British policemen. Now the police contact our lives at every turn, distributing to the humblest citizen advice, warning or permission. The police-station is as familiar as the church; the village policeman has supplanted the squire; fiction centres round their labours, and their startling intelligence is rewarded with the hand of a duke's daughter.

That is the British policeman (at least I hope it is), watched and controlled by the British Parliament, subjected to Judges' Rules, admired by American lady visitors, wearing the incorruptibility of Caesar's wife, and occasionally reaching the headlines for quite other reasons.

#### THE LESSON OF FRANCE

But you cannot say that policemen abroad are so human and so popular. They are always the first people to get murdered in times of trouble, and generally they deserve it. In France, as we know, one has only to say '*Mort aux Vaches*'<sup>1</sup> for the worst trouble to follow. The French *Chambre* never controlled the police. In fact it is not too much to say that M. Chiappe and the Paris police controlled French democracy and slew the *Chambre des Députés*. The police did not like the *Front Populaire*; they did like (or M. Chiappe did) the *Camelots du Roi* and the *Croix de Feu*. So the *Croix* now rules France and the *Front Populaire* is in gaol. That Seven Years' War has ended with French bureaucracy triumphant over French democracy—though M. Chiappe has met with an accident.

The lesson we should learn from France is to keep our bureaucracy out of politics, to thank our stars that partizanship has been discouraged in the Services both Civil and Military, and to watch in Parliament for any tendency to reward political party merit in the service. It is my impression—an impression shared and fostered by the British Union of Fascists—that our impartial British police were, before the war, becoming pronouncedly pro-Fascist, anti-Communist and even anti-Semitic. If that were so, the fault must lie with those who select the recruits and have promotion in their hands. The London police are controlled by the Home Office, which Parliament can watch. But outside London the Chief Constables and Watch Committees have the matter in their hands.

Herein lies one of the greatest dangers to our democracy. If the anti-

<sup>1</sup> Only Heaven, or M. Anatôle France, knows the inner meaning of this insult.



democrats capture the police and the bureaucracy, instilling into them dislike of parliamentary control, showing them how much more efficiently they could work unchecked by factious criticism from tiresome ignorant Members of Parliament or Watch Committees, then we too, like the French, may see our servants become our masters. I once imagined that any revolution from the Right would come from the War Office. That is not so; it will come (if come it does) slowly, insidiously, from the police, as in France.

We too are liable to the police-disease; but we start with far better traditions—a dislike of foreign ways, further removed from the class struggle, and with our eyes open to the danger. A wise Home Secretary would circularize to this effect all Chief Constables and Watch Committees. A wise Press would point out the danger.

#### PRESS ASSISTANCE

I turn to the Press. Parliament could do little to remedy grievances and control the bureaucracy without the Press, and the Press little without Parliament. Even together, with all their publicity, they could not preserve our liberties without an expectant and educated public opinion. Without willing readers the Press would not tell the story. Press, Parliament, pulpit, school-teachers and literature of all sorts create those who call the tune. "Were it left to me," said Jefferson, "to decide whether we should have a Government without newspapers, or newspapers without Government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

If we have in this country fairly efficient control of the bureaucracy, it is due to our Parliament, our Press, and our public opinion. On the Continent they have not the same intimate contact between executive and legislature, a more obedient public opinion, and a Press which respects liberty too little and enjoys licence too much. The absence of a law of libel enabled the Fascist Press of Germany and France to drive decent people out of politics and to lay the foundation for their own creed.

Abroad, as the complications of modern life increased, the bureaucracy swallowed up the Executive and became master over the people, who were without redress. This aggrandizement of bureaucracy and police was not the main reason for democracy's collapse, but it was one element which is often too little taken into reckoning. It needs to be exposed to view here, as a warning for the safety of our own liberties.

#### DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF JUSTICE

There remains one branch of the bureaucracy which we have not considered. Judges would resent being classed as a branch of any bureaucracy, for justice is more ancient and is still respected here far beyond any bureau of State. Yet judges are the paid servants of the State, controlled by Parliament (as is the Executive), though still present in that Parliament, of which they were once the core and the essence.

Judges in this country are appointed by the Executive for life. They can only be removed by vote of both Houses, and none has ever been so removed. The Lords of Appeal (the supreme Court of the Empire) sit in the House of Lords with the same privileges and rights and powers as other

lords, and are paid £6000 a year each for the exclusively legal part of their duties. As a permanent part of the Civil Service they are not supposed to have any Party, but to maintain an independent attitude.

Below the Lord Chancellor and the Lords of Appeal, the whole judicial hierarchy spreads down to the Justices of the Peace in every borough and county. They have all now ceased to be executive and become purely judicial, if not impartial. It is only indirectly that Parliament can seek to control either their judgments or their less balanced utterances. The risks of Contempt of Court restrain the Press from adverse comment, though publicity for an outrageous sentence or fractious *obiter dicta* often has the effect of censure.

We may suppose that in other lands 'justice' is sometimes to be bought, and sometimes intimidated by gangsters or government. No doubt prejudice still has influence here on many minor judicial decisions and in lower Courts; but since the Lord Chancellor, Lord Macclesfield, was expelled for corruption two hundred years ago, we have been free from both corruption and intimidation. Judges interpret the laws made by Parliament, they do not seek to alter them; they cannot veto them as in America. They are not judges of the Constitution, but have a defined position in that unwritten constitution. He would be a bold man who sought to increase the control of the democracy over the judiciary in Britain. Among all the wild, radical, or socialist schemes for Reform which have drifted through the last fifty years, not one has proposed that we should copy America and elect Judges or even Justices of the Peace. The most we hear is that they should not take three months' holiday in the summer, and compel litigants to wait in purgatory.

#### LAWYERS IN PARLIAMENT

Parliament objects to any of its Members acting as advocate in cases which are heard by Parliament's Private Bill Committees. Parliament does not object to its Members taking Treasury briefs and fees to appear in cases for the Crown which come before the Judges. It may make the Member who is briefed more amenable to the Government whips, but so does the deftly offered suggestion of a knighthood.

A very great number of judicial appointments are made from and in Parliament. Besides all the law officers of the Crown for England and Scotland who sit in the House of Commons or House of Lords, there are appointments waiting as soon as they desire them for nearly all barristers who are lucky enough to be elected to Parliament. Some, such as recorderships, can be held at the same time as a seat in the House. Others, if they fail to be made Lord Justices of Appeal, County Court Judges, or Stipendiary Magistrates, can usually become a Colonial Chief Justice and retire to Fiji or Jamaica.

Members of the Bar are much better at stating a case than is the ordinary Member of Parliament. They can explain Bills and proposed Amendments to Bills, can point out the encroachments of the bureaucracy concealed in a Bill with much greater clearness and perspicuity than will the Minister in charge of the Bill. On Standing Committee my aim has always been to get a barrister on his legs to explain the Bill and expound the existing law.

What we owe to lawyers in Parliament now is as nothing to what we have owed them throughout parliamentary history. The age-long struggle of Parliament against the Crown found its protagonist in Coke; but Fortescue

and Lyttelton had gone before. Erskine's silver tongue established the law of freedom, and Brougham carried the great Reform Bill on his ample shoulders. From 1350 onwards, the young lawyers made their early bow in the Commons House. Perhaps one fifth of the Members of the House have been lawyers of some sort ever since the middle of the 15th century, leavening the bucolic squires with the spice of wit and classic lore.

#### LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THEIR BUREAUCRACY

We are too apt to consider democracy only in relation to Parliament. In essence, Parliament, with executive and legislature centralized in Westminster, is less democratic than our County, City and Borough Councils; and these are less democratic than the Urban and Rural District Councils; while the Parish Council is often just pure democracy, all citizens present and consenting—or demurring.

The powers of a Parish Council are not extensive, but everybody in the parish sees what it does, knows what they are paying for, and can meet and discuss it. There is no majority rule on a Parish Council. Unanimity is natural, and their bureaucrat—the parish clerk—has no chance of scamping or delaying matters because everybody is looking on. It is a free society, not government.

The smaller the unit, the more everybody knows everybody and everything; as the unit grows to a District Council, more has to be delegated to servants and the elector is lost in a crowd. But we may consider more closely the functions and performance of a County Council. This is a miniature Parliament of some 60 members, directly elected by single member constituencies, with some co-opted aldermen. There is little legislation, merely the framing occasionally of a few by-laws. The Council's function is therefore executive. The Chairmen of a dozen Committees are, as it were, Cabinet Ministers (unpaid). Each Committee looks after its own job and reports to the full Council, who confirm or refer back the proposals of the Committee. The permanent paid officials sit each on their appropriate Committee as advisers, forming with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman a bureau responsible for the conduct of the department.

Education, police, roads, asylums, and small holdings are the most important spheres of activity. Revenue is drawn by rates levied upon the annual value of all house and factory property, but not upon agricultural or unused land. They are assisted by grants from the Exchequer, and valuation of property and collection of the rates is left to the Urban and Rural District or Town Councils. Democratic County Councils, including the London County Council, were only started in 1888, so that they have no long traditions. But in most cases they are run with clean hands by the gentry. Labour is not strongly represented on most of the Councils owing to there being no payment for lost time, and to the absence of those functions of Government of special interest to Labour.

The Labour Party seeks no alteration in the scope and method of County Government, save the payment for time lost in attending their meetings. The tendency of socialists is generally to pass laws which shall compel the local authority to act; but the general practice, which socialists do not seriously oppose, is to make optional such laws as concern the Councils' activities.

My own objection to the present working of County Councils is that their

resources are levied in such a manner as to discourage the improvement of property, and yet to increase the purchase price and rent of agricultural land.

#### THE POWER OF TOWN CLERKS

From the democratic point of view, local government in Great Britain is rather better than in those lands where English is not spoken ; though it is not so popular or efficient as in the New England States. The County Councils are certainly less corrupt than any I know elsewhere. Where Britain differs from other lands is in the relative importance of Mayor and Clerk. The Mayor, generally a mediaeval survival, is an annually chosen figure-head. Power resides in the permanent paid servants, the Town Clerk and other officials.

Where (as in County Councils) the Chairman continues in office year after year, that Chairman tends to become Premier, influential ruler of the county, and the most important man therein. Elsewhere, the Town Clerk—head of all local bureaux of service—tends to become Prime Minister to a temporary constitutional sovereign. Some of the 'sovereigns' may give him trouble, but he survives their brief reigns. There are cases where the Town Clerkship has become hereditary in one family.

The ordinary Town or City Council is not very effective in the redress of grievances against the Town Clerk or city officials. There is always a good deal of patronage at the disposal of the head of a great city ; if that patronage gets entirely into the hands of the Town Clerk, few Councillors will care to make themselves troublesome to that high functionary. Fortunately, in Parliament, we do not know even the name of the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. But the Town Clerk sits beside the Chairman on every Committee to instruct him and thus has a very powerful influence on criticism and efficiency. I doubt whether such appointments should be made for life. Indeed, control of local bureaucracy might be considered dormant in England. We are an easier people to govern than the Scots or the Irish.

#### REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES IN AMERICA

Obviously the popularity of Parliament in Britain comes from its power and practice in redressing wrongs suffered by the citizens, whether at the hands of the State or at the hands of foreign governments, or at the hands of the rich and powerful. How far do other Parliaments or Senates perform the same function and secure the like popularity ?

The Congress of the United States is a much more centralized assembly than is our Parliament. Quite half of the wide field covered by Parliament in Great Britain is dealt with in State Senates and Houses of Representatives at the capitals of the forty-nine (United) States of America. The man without his pension in Peoria writes not to Washington but to Springfield, Ohio, and almost certainly does not know the name of his representative in Congress. Nor can his representative, whether in the State or Federal Legislature, ask questions of the Secretary for the Interior or his State counterpart at Springfield, even if he wished to oblige a constituent. He is not at Washington to look after the grievances of half a million constituents, but to look after the interests of his Party in his constituency. Government contracts, Government appointments—for these he will go and see the officials themselves—holding over them the fear that if he cannot get his way he will go

and see the Minister, if that Minister represents his Party. To put it crudely : they seek not so much justice for an elector as advantage for a Party ; and they have no standing in either case, since they are completely divorced from the Executive, save only by the common bond of Party.

If grievances are redressed in America, such redress is obtained in the law courts, where justice is cheaper and more accessible than in this country. Your Senator or your Member in the House does not come into the picture. Indeed, I know of no reason why either individual or institution should enjoy any popularity at all, except among professional politicians. The Senators, without a blush, have put up a statue to Huey Long in the Senate House. Possibly, if some Huey Long or Father Coughlin establishes the Corporative State in America, they will then put up a triptych to Washington, Lincoln and Roosevelt, to gaze upon the scene in cold and disapproving silence.

#### REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES ELSEWHERE

Practically all the Parliaments of the Empire have adopted in some degree the British system of the Executive in Parliament, open to questioning and criticism. The Members are individually elected, and are known to their constituents (as in Great Britain) and are used for the redress of grievances. With India I deal separately ; all the other Parliaments are inferior to our own only because they have less responsibility outside their own borders. With little corresponding to our Foreign and Colonial Office, there is less scope for peripatetic benevolence or the wider humanities.

Some of the European parliaments are based on our model, *e.g.* Denmark, Hungary, and formerly Greece, and to them the preceding paragraph applies equally well. They also have the American advantage of cheaper access to normal justice in the courts. Others, such as France, have procedure which differs widely from our own, but yet have the Executive present among the Members—though without that Question hour in which to heckle the bureaucracy and enliven the representatives, the proceedings and the Press. The bureaucracy was so powerful and all-pervading in France that redress could hardly be sought through the *Chambre des Députés* or the *Sénat*. A wiser access was through the *coulisses* of the Minister's waiting-room.

The German Reichstag had a procedure balanced halfway between England and America. Ministers of State, usually elected Members of the Reichstag, sat at a high table with, but not amongst, their fellow Members. They could speak and explain and justify. Below them, in a separate pen, sat their permanent officials, heads of the various departments, who answered in person when directed from above. There were interpellations, drafted by a Party ; but Questions were usually directed to the permanent officials' pen, in order to bring up the grievances of constituents. As in America, most of these grievances were naturally dealt with in the various provincial *Landtage*—which were glorified editions of English County Councils, or less glorious copies of American State Legislatures.

Therefore in few of the countries outside the British Empire is that redress of grievances, which was ever the first duty of Parliament, to be found as a distinctive or prominent feature of democracy. Emphasis is ever laid on law-making, money-voting, and the direction of high policy, rather than on the grievances of the subject against the Crown. In all cases, sometimes by intention, sometimes by accident, the close connection between the British M.P. and his constituents has been avoided, and responsibility-to-Party

substituted for responsibility-to-electors. This has inevitably reduced the value to the electors of their own representative ; it has destroyed the almost paternal (or step-paternal) relations which exist in England between a Member and his constituents ; it has failed to provide the citizen with a channel of access to the bureaucrats, whose interference in his life grows year by year more intimate.

Therefore, fascists find Britain most unresponsive of all to their denunciations of Parliament. However it may fare with other democracies, we are still useful, and by reason of our utility freedom may still survive.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CORRUPTION

*"Many of the greatest tyrants on the records of history have begun their reigns in the fairest manner. But the truth is, this unnatural power corrupts both the heart and the understanding."*

EDMUND BURKE, M.P., 1756.

THE collapse of democracy in Europe was the work of the fascist enemies of democracy. They took advantage of those weaknesses which must endanger every form of parliamentary rule.

These weaknesses are : unpopularity, inefficiency, corruption and Party violence.

In the preceding chapter we have shown the peculiar popularity of our Parliament—that there is for it a popular demand. It is not just another distant, aloof, bureau for making laws, but the last hope of the man in the street. It is poor ground for the fascist agitator on the supposition of unpopularity. The M.P. is used by his constituents not for political purposes alone but for every social event.

So much for the first weakness—not much of a weakness here. With inefficiency we deal in the next chapter, and with the grave danger of Party coercion and violence in Chapter X. Let us now consider the much advertised vice of corruption in high places.

Corruption, bad in itself, makes the best propaganda weapon for Fascism, since it must arouse mean jealousy and indignant virtue. The clever enemies of democracy, by rumour, shrug and innuendo, play on the jealousy felt by the ignorant masses for those in official position. "You put them there," they say to the mob ; "see what use they make of your trust." They can say it with safety of those who govern by democratic methods. Yet reason can best be upset by unreasoning emotions—such as hatred, malice; and all uncharitableness.

The Fascists have two admirable forcing-grounds for emotional jealousy. (1) Corruption and luxury in high places, (2) spoils by favour of the Party. Can they but get the man in the street, the reader of their Press, or the emotional world, to believe : that Mr. Churchill's cigars are all presents from some sinister 'black hand' with which Mr. Churchill consorts at midnight in Soho ; or that Mr. Roosevelt's name was Rosenfeld until the Elders of Zion selected and bribed him to destroy the American Constitution ; that dallying with damsels from the demi-monde is the main preoccupation of French

Ministers—then the man in the street acquires a virtuous glow for himself, a contempt for those in authority, and a gentle regret that he has not at least been tempted to share in these strange delights.

In like manner the Fascists will show that those in power help their friends at the expense of the ordinary stupid citizen. For them the jobs, for them the houses, for them exemptions from service and taxation. Jealousy, that was used to denounce the rich, can be even more effective in denouncing those in power in a democracy. Can they but point to corruption, the Fascist game is won.

#### CORRUPTION OF TWO SORTS

Corruption in public life is of two kinds—the financial corruption of the elected Member, either by the foreigner or by the Executive or by vested interests; and the financial corruption of the electorate, by bribery or promised benefits.

If Parliament is seen to be an open door for acquisition of wealth, every Member becomes suspect to the electorate, jealousy is aroused, and rumour encouraged. Party Press exaggerates, and the bad example is followed throughout the nation—destroying all respect and honesty. The enemy Press has only to advertise the sickness, to secure the demise of such corrupt democracy. So may have died the French and Italian Parliaments. It has been our immense good fortune that, for the last hundred years, a plunge into British politics has been expensive rather than remunerative. The distinction and power given by a seat in Parliament is still adequate to attract the best people to Westminster; no bribe is yet needed to induce public work.

This was not always so, and may not endure. During the 18th century unreformed Parliaments were the paradise of paid hangers-on—so corrupt and so despised that we lost America. So corrupt was it, and so despised by America, that it resulted in the revolutionary Fathers of the American Constitution separating for ever corruptible law-makers from corrupting Executive.

#### DOES THE CAREER PAY?

Honesty may not endure here, because a Parliamentary career is no longer so unremunerative. Lord Baldwin raised the salaries of all Ministers of the Crown; the war has made it necessary to double the number of these Government offices; Mr. Chamberlain has raised the pay of M.P.s from £400 to £600 a year; State interference with trade, with business and labour has increased the number of vested interests dependent on Parliament; more than one Labour leader has set a bad example to a Party predominantly poor and specially susceptible to either good or bad example; Government directorships and other highly paid posts outside Parliament, available on (or without) retirement, have multiplied.

At the same time, the growth of Party control has to some extent increased the unavoidable humiliations of a political career. Once we attract to Parliament those who aim at personal advantage, we lose those who intend only public advantage—they do not like the uncongenial company. We may compare this with a school acquiring a bad name, which disaster always ante-dates demise.

At present I see no evidence of bad name, loss of respect, nor lack of



candidates from the best quarters. But the lover guards jealously the fragile reputation of his mistress. The collapse of democracy calls for an inquest, that we may reassure ourselves and reanimate others ; in short, set a good example. Corruption is in truth easier to eradicate during this state of total war, when private gain has lost its main appeal.

I propose, therefore, to give examples—of what is commendable in our parliamentary life ; what is tolerable, and what is intolerable, where personal financial gain is concerned.

#### THE GOOD EXAMPLE OF PARLIAMENT

Ever since 1905, all persons on entering the British Cabinet have resigned from the direction of any public or private company, and from any profession or business in which they were engaged, with the sole exception of agriculture. Writing for the Press is barred to them, though not broadcasting, for which they may accept fees. It is true that the management of the British Commonwealth is in any case a 'whole-time job', but the barrier was erected to prevent suspicion of interested motives and on grounds of public policy.

Many of these Cabinet Ministers went further. Lewis Harcourt told me that when he was made Secretary of State for the Colonies he drew up a list of his investments and instructed the permanent head of his Department to tick for sale all those which might in any way be affected by his policy in office. I quoted this to Sir Thomas Inskip, the Attorney-General, when he was made Co-ordinator of the Defence Services, an office which gave him power over great contracts and was wide open to every suspicion. He replied : "All my investments are in Government stock, and have been so since first I took office."

Junior Ministers and law officers all, I believe, follow the example of Cabinet Ministers. This 'self-denying ordinance' prevents the business man—a useful element in the House—from accepting an under-secretaryship ; and Sir Robert Horne may have refused to return to Cabinet office because of the five highly paid directorships which he held. It is more probable that he declined to accept any lesser office than the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, which office he had held before. But even if one or two useful men have been lost to the public service by this bar, how can that loss compare with the advantage to the public service of the example, and the respect which comes from such example ?

#### MINISTERIAL PENSIONS

The puritanical government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1905-8) ended a further cause for scandal. Till then, ex-Ministers, whether of Cabinet or subordinate rank, might apply because of poverty for a certain limited number of pensions of £2000 or £1000 a year. Gradually the definition of poverty became nebulous. All the limited number of pensions were snapped up as soon as vacant ; and George Villiers, in receipt of such pension, lived to ninety and left £90,000, having held some minor office for twelve months forty years before ! There were worse scandals when an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer was induced to surrender his pension for the benefit of another ; and Campbell-Bannerman, newly come to power, refused to continue the practice. For many years only Mr. Speaker and the Lord Chancellor received pensions ; now, recently, ex-Prime Ministers get £2000 a year. In some



cases loss of office without pension involved real hardship. A pension was refused to George Barnes, the Labour M.P., in 1923, though he had sat in the War Cabinet. It was refused by Mr. MacDonald and the Labour Government. Had it not been for the private generosity of Lord Davies and Mr. Baldwin, the most honest and respected of Labour leaders would have died in extreme poverty. Fortunately Mr. Andrew Carnegie provided in his will for both Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. John Burns.

Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill were always able to earn large sums by writing, either for the Press or for publishers. But, deprived of office and salary, many ex-Cabinet Ministers accept directorships in the City and are thus placed under a quite undesirable obligation. I do not think we have yet solved the problem of what to do with ex-Cabinet Ministers who are 'playing'. But I am quite certain that the poor man who gets into the Cabinet, and changes his style of living in consequence, is laying up trouble for himself. He loses caste, self-respect, and happiness. I have watched such men trying to get back to office, and it is a humiliating spectacle.

#### THE FINE EXAMPLE OF LABOUR

But let us look at some others—Mr. Bonar Law, when Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1916 or 1917, observed that his shipping shares were bringing him unexpected wealth, and therefore suggested the Excess Profits Tax to prevent that sort of thing. Mr. Baldwin, when Secretary to the Treasury outside the Cabinet, anonymously donated to the State £150,000, from the unexpected war-prosperity of his family steelworks. This would never have been made public had I not seen in the exposure advantage for democracy and for our reputation. Recently a Scottish Labour M.P. was made Secretary of State for Scotland, the salary being £5000 a year. Tom Johnston declines to take any salary beyond the £600 a year he gets as Member of Parliament. Two other Labour Members are Deputy Regional Commissioners. It is usual in those posts to accept considerable emoluments—the Labour Members for Flint and Chester-le-Street decline to take a penny. These examples of disinterestedness are partly due to the war-spirit of unselfish service, and partly intended to maintain the morale of the Labour Party inside and outside the House. The Members in question always were of the working class, and they prefer to continue to live among their own, without arousing jealousy and with assured respect. As long as such men are our type of political Labour leader one need not be anxious for British political life.

#### THE CASH VALUE OF A SEAT

To illustrate the unmercenary spirit in which men enter Parliament, I cannot do better than cite the cases of Lord Robert Cecil and Noel Buxton from the answers to my Questionnaire. Lord Robert, then aged 38, was earning £4000 to £6000 a year, mostly at the Parliamentary Bar. An M.P. may not practise at the Parliamentary Bar; he therefore gave up some £3000 a year to enter Parliament as an advocate of free trade. Noel Buxton was a director of his family brewing business, drawing as such £1000 a year. But he was elected as a Liberal at a time when the brewing interest and the Liberal Party were bitterly opposed. His politics cost him his directorship, and at that time Members were not paid.

These are perhaps exceptional cases. Normally, a seat in Parliament

does help a professional man. The lawyer gets more briefs and promotion; the solicitor gets more clients; the doctor, architect, engineer, professor, journalist, takes a higher rank in his profession and speaks for his fellows in public. The "M.P." secures publicity, if not higher fees.

It used to be supposed that M.P.s were besieged by company promoters anxious to get their names on the prospectus of doubtful flotations, in order to attract the injudicious investor. I am not personally repellent; any offer to me will always be considered! Yet in all my 36 years in Parliament I have only twice been invited to join any board of directors, and on both occasions judgment got the better of appetite.

The fact is, we all have to be trebly cautious in matters financial. We are constantly under the searchlight of Press and opponents; so that a man risks losing his seat as well as his money. But, worst of all, one risks ostracism by one's fellow Members, who hate having the House 'let down' by an M.P. 'getting into the papers'. It is permitted to sell a man a foundered horse, or go off with a man's wife, but not to get into the Press over jiggery-pokery in the City. One of my friends once wrote a testimonial for publication with portrait complete. He could never hold up his head again. They did not jest, saying, "Whose soap do you recommend today?" They said, "My God! He has got to make money like that!" and looked the other way. There are many very poor M.P.s and many very rich ones; but it is better for both to avoid disclosing the matter. "It isn't done" to talk of such things. Only in virtue of your representation or ideas are you of interest to your fellow Members.

No doubt it is a curious sort of club, but emphasis may rightly be laid on the futility of joining it in order to get rich. There is so little point in getting rich, when the consideration and power (which are the main objects of wealth-hunting) can be attained without worry and may be lost just because of a hunt for money. We wish our wives would not bother us for the stuff—and few of them do. I will not pretend that our Prime Minister when out of office was not delighted to get 200 guineas for an article, or that I am not equally delighted at getting one tenth of such a fee; for it shows so clearly our (respective) popularity and brilliance!

In the House, therefore, our community existence and wide interests and enthusiasms spoil the market for corruption. At the same time the public opinion of the House requires from each Member certain restraints demanded by that community opinion. We all find it most unpleasant to 'let down' the House. Shady conduct receives a salvo of kicks in the pants. The House of Commons is 'this honourable House'; and the new Member is rapidly taught to conform and acquire the tone.

#### THE LIMITS OF CALUMNY

Any 'corruption' must therefore conform to the tone and to the standards of the House. There is great latitude. One may accept reward from Government, travelling expenses, briefs, office, promotion, honours. One may accept a proffered directorship, and speak for the United Bottle-washers' Association—or Trade Union—so long as the House knows one is in their pay. Sir Frederick Banbury always stated: "I am speaking in the railway interest; I am a director." We know that Members for dockyard towns are bound to urge Government to pay more to their constituents. We can smile and walk out, but we do not think the worse of Bertram Falle

or Lady Astor. "Thank God I do not sit for a dockyard constituency!" is the only comment.

Above all, one may accept expenses and a bit more for speaking, even for one's own colleagues in their constituencies. Brotherhoods and Pleasant Sunday Afternoons and Non-conformist chapels are even more generous to Labour M.P.s. Arthur Henderson, a pillar of Non-conformity, used often in his less affluent days to manage three chapels near each other in one week-end, with appropriate fees from each. There was a blissful period when Ethel Snowden could command a hundred guineas for a speech. I myself never managed more than \$100, and that was in America. Indeed, I often reflect that in England I have to pay an audience to come and listen to me, while in happy America it is the other way round. Once the Southampton Brotherhood—the biggest and best—wrote asking me to speak. "Choose your own subject, you can get back to town the same day. We pay 1st class fare and ask you to accept an honorarium of ten guineas," so they said. I replied that I did not usually speak on non-political subjects, but that I could not resist a fee of ten guineas. Perhaps that was not just a tactful reply; at least, by return of post the secretary apologized, saying they had meant the invitation for Mr. Wedgwood Benn!

Speaking and journalism were the main support of Labour Members before payment of Members was adopted. Now the budding M.P. would be better advised to leave journalism alone, lest his competition with the profession should incur reproach. If, however, you have a 'cause' and wish to get your views across, there is no better way than amateur journalism; and in that case all will be excused, though little will be accepted.

So far, I claim to have painted a true picture of the unmercenary M.P.—never a plaster saint, but little tempted to corruption by gold. What stories are there to the contrary? There was Mr. Lloyd George and the 'Marconi scandal'. Mr. Lloyd George, while President of the Board of Trade, had played the Stock Exchange, buying Marconi shares on a margin, on the advice of his friend Sir Rufus Isaacs, who had once been on the Stock Exchange. He lost his margin and had to pay up. For the life of me I cannot see what was wrong in that, or why a solemn Committee should have been set up to enquire and report.

But, of course, there are bad eggs! There was Horatio Bottomley. He was a swindler who got money from fools on a bonus investment scheme. He was expelled and went to prison quietly. There was a man who got news of the Budget from a Minister and gambled on a certainty on the Stock Exchange. They had to go. So did another Member who drew a free railway ticket for himself and allowed his wife to use it. Quite recently an Under-Secretary got into grave trouble on the mere suspicion of being invited to take a commission on money he had recovered for a Czech refugee before he was made a Minister. I name these cases to show the immediate reaction of the House of Commons towards any suggestion of financial corruption. There have been no other cases in all my political life of 36 years; and if these are the worst, we may be excused if we call the House of Commons relatively free and absolved from that particular vice.

#### FEMALE CORRUPTION

No doubt some of us could 'do with the stuff'; there was once a yellow crook, Trebitsch Lincoln, who for a passing season disgraced Darlington.

The trouble is that nobody wants to corrupt those from whom all shrink ; this man could have been of no use, even to Caligula or Hitler. As for the more picturesque corruption by feminine charm—I have known a lady willing to suffer 'worse than death' to get out of me information I had not got, all for the supposed benefit of Michael Collins. There ! I doubt if other M.P.s have even one such delightful and ridiculous memory. We are all despairingly open to temptation, but it never comes. We are not worth it. "To get a job for 'hubby'," perhaps ! But who would put himself into 'hubby's' hands (or shoes) like that ? Alas ! all those beautiful spy stories remain romances, so far as the dear old gentlemen in Parliament are concerned. Of course I know that when Esmond Harmsworth went, almost vice-regally, to Budapesth, the Mayor told him quite frankly that he had a hundred countesses prepared to sacrifice all for their country. I need hardly say that Esmond Harmsworth did not succumb to the temptation. We others may be naturally immoral ; but we are all so cautious. Even Cabinet Ministers remain impervious to the most lovely secretaries, and in the Press photographs are always shown greeted by their wives. I feel that we must be the despair of Fascism.

But abroad, of course, all is different ! Those worthy Social Democrats of the Weimar Republic were, doubtless, corrupted by the gold of Stinnes ! Karl Liebknecht led a double life ! Walter Rathenau, who was shot down in his motor-car, was a Jew, and why doubt the infamies of Jews ! *Action Française* and the French Press have demonstrated to France and the world what French politicians were. Every politician had his forged certificates, or his blackmail in a black box, concealed by a corrupt police trained in assassination. All Ministers kept at least a brace of mistresses who directed national policy, and the Black Mass was the normal procedure of Lodges of the Grand Orient.

As for America, where the unknown over the telephone replaces or supplements the labours of the pure Fascist Press, one gathers that Congressmen and Senators, not to mention Presidents, all have Teapot Dome scandals in their past and Tennessee Boulder dam contracts in their pockets. The multiplication of their wives does not so much matter in view of the conveniences of Reno.

The fact is, enemies of democracy 'play up' corruption in order to arouse jealousy and cupidity in the Fascist mob, which just shows what the fascist mob consists of. Any of the wretched monarchies of a hundred years ago could give points and a beating to modern democracy in every variety of financial and sexual corruption. For the free Press of democracies can see and say and guess, where those who live in fear of the police are more prudently silent.

#### ANTI-SEMITISM

The great discovery of Fascist reaction has been not the moral or financial corruption of politicians but the corruption of blood and race. If all else fails, if in some freedom champion one can find neither mistress nor black-box, at least one may discover that his grandmother was a Jewess. The blood is tainted and corrupt ! Roosevelt's name was Rosenfeld, Churchill's mother was a Jerome, which is short for Jeroboam, if not for Jeremiah. The Jews batten on Christian children, plot to destroy the world, and are the

origin of all evil. Anyway, Hitler does not like them ; and it is quite safe to rob and murder Jews, and quite profitable to stir up fools to see everywhere the hidden hand of international Jewry.

Hatred of strangers, disgust at the habits of aliens, resentment at their competition, are indigenous in the brute creation, and always affect islanders more than continentals with open boundaries. The Greeks regarded all as barbarians, fit only to be the slaves of the free Greeks. The Roman Empire and the Roman Church were more catholic, and changed the exclusiveness of the Greeks to a toleration of the widest Roman citizenship and religion. African and Gothic barbarians, even coloured gentlemen, became Emperors ; Stilicho and Narses led their legions ; the bishop of Rome became the Primate of the civilized world.

In this island, no sooner had the English ceased to be the serfs of the alien Norman than every other alien became utterly obnoxious. At different times it was the alien churchmen, the Jew, the Flemings, the Welsh, the Irish, the Catholics, the French, and Doctor Johnson's friends dared even to despise the Scots. The London mob enjoyed impartially the Lord George Gordon riots, the Popish Plot and the Fascist sub-war in Whitechapel. The more brutal the mob, the more they howled. " 'E's a stranger ! 'Eave 'alf a brick at 'im ! " was ever the motto of the brute creation.

When I was young there was no anti-Semitism in England, because there were few Jews other than a handful of ultra-respectable Sephardic gentlemen of old family. It was after 1890 that Jewish refugees from Russian pogroms began pouring forth from Russian ghettos into America and our East End, bringing with them a vile jargon, conspicuous poverty, and a determination to get out of the gutter. Liberal England of Mr. Gladstone's generation spoke well of them as honest, industrious, and charitable ; and the Liberalism of those days contrasted our 'right of asylum' with the monstrous persecution of Captain Dreyfus in France.

Even now, in my own country of North Staffordshire, there are but a handful of Jews, and so little anti-Semitism that my conspicuous care for refugees from Hitler only enhanced my useful reputation for humanity. I found admirable political results in a wise substitution of a Jewish refugee for myself in addressing chapel audiences. You will find no hint of anti-Semitism in Sir Walter Besant's account of East End life in *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* which resulted in the People's Palace. In fact it was their competition with the sweated workers of the East End which provided the seeding-ground for the crop of anti-Semitism we see today. The ground was watered and stimulated for political reasons, race-hatred being so useful a substitute for argument and reason.

So useful has anti-Semitism been found, first for Conservative and later for Fascist politicians, that, reading the daily papers now, one must suppose that the British people are innocent of all crime, mean or violent—that every race-tout, lounge-lizard, racketeer, swindler, blackguard and bankrupt is either a Jew or an Irishman. Since people tend to act as is expected of them, that is no doubt good for Englishmen, but pretty bad for Jews and Irish. The same tendency is shown in all complaints about evacuee children. The savage, dirty and dishonest are always either Jews or Irish, from the slums of London, Manchester and everywhere else. 'Give a dog a bad name and hang him ! ' Moreover, the religious and civil leaders of these pariahs get so disheartened by the unanimity of disapproval that the injustice of it eradicates any desire to attempt improvement. "Expel the black sheep

from the community? What is the good? We are all 'black sheep' in the cruel eyes of the Gentile!'

By the torture, prolonged from age to age;  
By the infamy, Israel's heritage;  
By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's disgrace;  
By the badge of shame, by the felon's place;  
By the branding-tool, the bloody whip, . . .

we all create our own Jews; and even we have better Jews than we deserve. For there is no doubt that anti-Semitic prejudice is fellow to corruption in the fascist armoury for use against Parliament. Another yelp in the same agitation is 'The Godless State'; another the Freemasonry of the Grand Orient, the *bloc de la Juiverie*, as they termed it in France. Corruption, Jews, Freemasons, Bolsheviks—all are piled up together in denunciation of 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'.

#### DISHONESTY AND SLACKING

Quite as serious as the grosser charge of corruption made against public men, politicians and officials is the less-advertised charge, but more serious fact, of dishonesty and slacking. This charge is not so much made as encouraged by Fascists. Most people are honest, because they would not like their wives and relations and friends to find them otherwise. It is public opinion more than law, tradition, or even conscience that keeps one straight.

Now, in war, people old and young are taken away from their families and friends, so that the normal restraints on conduct weaken. In war, new State restraints and State property and State employment affect all; and robbing the State, or swindling a State employer, has always appeared to many to be a lesser form of vice, hardly amounting to dishonesty. Soldiers on active service always tend to have increasingly peculiar views on the sanctity of private property; and even in peace-time wangling an extra 6d. a week out of Government has attracted all ranks. 'Expenses' are what will be 'passed', not what was spent, and the former nearly always exceeds the latter. In total war we all tend to come down to the soldiers' standards in money matters. There is less shame, and, being away from home, nobody to know.

It is this moral deterioration, caused by the absence of normal checks and vastly increased opportunities, that produces the shoplifting, looting, racketeering, swindling and robbery with violence among young and old, male and female, that we see today. Exactly the same cause accounts for much of the idling and absenteeism in the workshops. But idling and slacking of the working class come mostly (as in the upper classes) from having too much money and no fear of losing your job. Neither we nor they ever blamed the master, manufacturer or farmer for taking a day off for hunting or partridge-shooting; so they take a day off for the 'dogs', or for a cold in the head—'just like master'. Where there were formerly two men for every job, there are now two jobs for every man, and 'master' had better understand that his best war-work henceforth is to set a good example.

Here indeed is something for the Fascist orator to bite on, for in dictator countries moral deterioration secures the immediate attention of the police, and punishment takes no account of slackened standards or temptation. Fascists, however, do not complain of dishonesty and idleness under

democracy, having too many leanings in that direction themselves. But we who value democracy had better recognize the danger and consider how best to stop it.

Slacking in the workshops is met in Russia by altogether admirable publicity and persuasion. In each workshop is a large diagram divided into a dozen columns, at the head of each a picture : an aeroplane, a railway engine, a motor-car, a pair of skis, a droshky, a gig, a wagon, a donkey, a cat, a caterpillar, a snail—each representing different rates of progress. Each week, according to output, each worker's name is entered under the appropriate column. No one likes being in the snail column. One sees at once sport, humour, and competition. Who could resist it ? Not the British working man, if he could get into his head that he is not working for Mr. Jones but for his country.

I would not rebuke magistrates for punishing too lightly such crimes as shoplifting, minor looting, etc. But in every case I would ensure adequate publicity for the name and home address. The object must be to cover them with such shame that they do not repeat the venture. At present, too many find a sort of glory in petty crime and in the punishment. There was a great deal to be said for the old-fashioned stocks. To exhibit folly is to cure it.

Of course we have been told that this lawlessness and low morality is due to Godless education and Communist teaching. The Irish Roman Catholics have a completely religious education, free from any Communist taint, but I do not think they are better citizens than the rest of the population. Probably bad morals (like bad manners and bad language) come from bad leaders, whether at home, or at school, or in the Army, or Civil Defence. If I were asked to cure the rot, I should enquire how they cured it in Soviet Russia after the revolution. Then they were faced with the same problem of children run savage, and a whole population living by what they could scrounge.

It is advisable to cure the rot, for not only is it a blot upon democracy, but these unsocial pests are just the breeding-ground for Fascism.

#### FASCISM AS SALVATION !

Whence comes this insatiable desire to destroy democracy ? The answer must be the fear of socialism. This fear is mainly felt by those who enjoy established wealth and dread losing it. A considerable cause of the last war was the Kaiser's fear of his Social-Democrats in the Reichstag. He sought, by attacking Russia, to distract his people's minds from socialism. After the war Bolshevik-Communism was even more terrifying to established wealth and power. It seemed inevitable that the 'have-nots', being in a majority, should take from the 'haves'. Half the Continent smouldered with revolution from the Left, making 1919 far more dreadful than 1914.

Then arose the blessed Benito Mussolini, armed with propaganda for dividing the mob and thus save established wealth and power. All the good and great sighed with relief as he proved the wisdom of Commander Sin :

Whatever happens, we have got  
The Maxim guns, and they have not.

It will be remembered that this ineffable truth enabled Belloc's *Modern Traveller* to keep his niggers in order. It enabled modern statesmen to do



the same with nigger-socialists. It opened the eyes of all who thought the Cause was lost. Everywhere established wealth took heart and joined the New Order in which they found their old place at the table.

#### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

In this matter High Finance preceded by very little the Church of Rome. It is the aim of the Church to keep out of mundane and national politics. The Roman Catholic in England owes spiritual allegiance to Rome, and worldly allegiance to his native land. But it is not easy to separate things spiritual from things temporal. There were strong Catholic political parties in France and Germany, which looked to Rome for secular guidance. The new Irish Sinn Fein Party had as open an orientation. Before Mussolini's 'March on Rome' a strong Catholic Party had arisen in Italy also, under Dom Sturzo, a political priest. The Catholic Church was, in fact, trying to co-operate with democracy in the Old World, as successfully as she was doing in the Province of Quebec.

But with the crowning mercy of Mussolini's victory a much easier way became obvious. Instead of co-operating with democracy, the Church could safely withdraw from politics. Dom Sturzo was thrown over, his party was disowned, and the Vatican came to terms with the destroyers and autocrats.

Portugal was rescued for the Church by Dr. Salazar's rule. There was hope in Austria, and the Viennese democracy was smashed by Dr. Seipel, Cardinal Innitzer and the Vaterland front. Von Papen joined Hitler—though the *Centrum* did not do so in time and Hitler slew his new allies without scruple or gratitude. The alliance with the Endeks in Poland was hardly more remunerative, owing to Pilsudsky's egotism. However, democracy died all right in both countries.

Abyssinia was a windfall. But most of all were Spain and France to be saved. The best weapon to win all was the bogey of Bolshevik Russia. The Crusade against the Spanish Republic took two bloody years to consummate, bequeathed only a ruined Spain and a hostile Falange, and injured throughout the world the good name of the Catholic Church. Democracy went down to a flaming and immortal end, and carried down with it a world in flames.

For France, democracy was killed by the fall of Spain. Then died the Popular Front—then arose the Cagouards and Col. de la Roque's *Croix de Feu*. These were copied by the Fascists of *Christus Rex* in Belgium (encouraged by a calculating King); by Fascists in Holland, in Brazil, in all America south of the Rio Grande, and by Father Coughlin, who spouted in the citadel of democracy itself.

Wherever the Church was against democracy, democracy fell at the first push of tyranny. The Fifth Column established Franco in Spain, Pétain in France, Seipel in Austria, and maybe more to come. Fascism would not have succeeded by itself. It has been the alliance of the authoritarian Church with the authoritarian State which has broken democracy, or beaten it back into the northern wilds and outer islands; Britain is in the balance.

#### THE HISTORICAL PARALLEL

How similar are these last thirty years to the last thirty years of the 16th century! For fifty previous years, Protestantism in the 16th and democracy



in the 19th centuries had spread with hardly a check, even into Italy and the Spain of the Most Christian and Most Orthodox rulers. Then, in the 16th century, came the Counter-Reformation, inspired by the fanaticism of Jesuits and Franciscans. Back went the cause of individual judgment and liberty—out of Spain and Italy, out of France, out of Hungary and Bohemia and Poland, out of Belgium to the last dikes of the Seven Provinces. Scandinavia and Scotland hardly escaped. Germany and England became a battleground, one ruined, the other triumphantly rejuvenated.

Just as and where the Reformation went back, so there goes back democracy today. It has been the alliance of Fascism with the authoritarian teachings of the Church of Rome that has been and will yet be fatal. Rule by democracy and rule by the Church of Rome are incompatible.

#### THE CHURCH AND APPEASEMENT

We may suppose that the same influence has been active in this country and has affected our own policy. That was noticeably true of our half-hearted action over the oil sanctions against Italy and the use of the Suez Canal at the time of the Abyssinian rape. Some were bluffed by Mussolini, but most were either pleased to appease him or afraid that if we fought him Italy would go Bolshevik. The same sentimental attitude, coupled with fear of the Catholic vote, caused that ridiculous 'non-intervention' in Spain, which placed the Spanish coast on our sea routes in the hands of our enemies. The whole appeasement policy, from the destruction of the socialists of Vienna down to the fall of Prague, has been in accordance with the wishes of the Vatican.

Those guilty of the appeasement now have the effrontery to allege that we were not then adequately armed to fight. 'Give us two years more to arm' was ever their cry, and each year we fell further *behind* the rearming of Germany. We should have been a better match for them in 1935 than in 1939 *and* might still have had some friends. The one-by-one policy sank us all and (temporarily) lost us Russian aid; but it has not yet gained for democracy the help of the Roman Church.

#### ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

There is no direction in which Catholic influence is more obvious than in our propaganda, whether from the Foreign Office, or Ministry of Information, or the B.B.C. There, key-men are placed and supported by their Church with infinite care. The propaganda, whether to enemy countries or neutrals, is diametrically opposite to that coming from Russia. The soviets try to stir up active revolt and sabotage from the Left; we urge patience till 'the day' and hope for revolt from the good people of the Right. Anyone listening to our broadcasts to Austria would suppose that no socialists had ever existed in Vienna or Linz. While the Italy of Mazzini and Rienzi is forgotten, we may listen to the burble of the Dante Societies. Hardly a line from *Soviet War News* passes over our B.B.C., and, when forced to allow us the Internationale, they invent new words and mangle the tune. One must suppose that to the Catholics of the Foreign Office and B.B.C. it is still disreputable to have for our ally one so displeasing to the Vatican.

## FASCIST RECRUITS

We may say, therefore, that the effective allies in the fight against democracy were originally the wealthy, fearful of socialists, and the Catholic Church, fearful of politicians. Even such a union could not have been successful had it not been able to collect and appeal to vast numbers of discontented people. The 1919 peace left such people everywhere; inflation and, alternatively, unemployment swelled their ranks to immense proportions. The reason for their trouble might be obscure, but was clear to those who might turn it to useful account. Let agitators scream loudly enough that the cause of all trouble was Parliament-men, chain stores, bankers, moneylenders, Jews, Freemasons, British and—best of all—the Bolsheviks, and all the discontented would rally to the New Order. Always it was to be the fault of the other fellow, so Fascism could move the audience to hate, frenzy, and hero-worship.

They surpassed the wildest Communist on his own ground. They collected in every fascist movement all who were dissatisfied, and they pictured democracy contemptible, Russia hateful, and Jews both. They soon got beyond the control of their originators, so that Thyssen, the rich, fled in vain to France, and Cardinal Innitzer found his Canossa at Schwarzenburg, but without pardon.

While both the discarded patrons—Finance and Church—have now forsworn Fascism, this new world-wide creed still retains the original idea. Church and wealth both had an overwhelming interest in stopping Communism: Fascism, equally interested, can still cry 'Corruption', 'Jews', 'Capitalist Society', 'Godless State'. But Fascism *plus* Gestapo *plus* invincibility is now terrifying the Church and many States. The Church now prays success for another version of more gentlemanly protection—that of old Marshal Pétain—in the shape of a virtuous, dutiful peasantry, worshipping God, such as may still be found in the Tyrol or in Canada. But there is not much chance anywhere in this total war for 'Family, Faith and whatever it is'—least of all in France and Spain and Italy, where hope of vengeance is all that is left.

It is difficult even to estimate what proportion of the British Union of Fascists was pure ruffian or Irish Republican Army. The Home Office have the names of some 8000 who were paying or paid members of the Union at the outbreak of war, but will not publish the names. From my abuse-mail, which covers a wide field,<sup>1</sup> I should suppose that well over half must be both Irish and illiterate; all seem equally anti-Semitic.

How is such a Party recruited? Apart from love of pageantry, emotion and submission, its recruits are drawn from three allied sources: those who have not been 'treated fair' by the Labour Party; those disgusted by the neglect of the Conservative Party; and egomaniacs for whom their country has no longer any use. The grievance-gang is the backbone (or tool) of every anti-democratic movement.

But they are not for long welcome members of any movement. I have two in mind who for some twenty years have oscillated between grievances against the Labour Party, the Conservative Party, the Communist Party; they are always ready to come back to any Party willing to salve their

<sup>1</sup> I include, of course, the considerable contribution made to my collection by the parallel 'America First' organization in the United States.

self-esteem, but so boring with stories of their importance ! Their intelligence rarely extends beyond 'Up Mosley' scrawled on the walls. Fascism is in fact an old-fashioned form of faith. The British Union of Fascists is the exact equivalent of the Catholic League which followed the Duc de Guise through the Parisian slums of the 16th century.

#### METHODS OF CORRUPTION

However unsavoury the British Union of Fascists in this country, or the Fascist movement generally, may be, it would be as well to avoid supplying these gentry with ammunition. Most of us cannot avoid being either British or Jew—but we can avoid being corrupt, untruthful and disingenuous.

The art of corruption is as old as the ages. The lady is most readily seduced by admiration of her person, the statesman by admiration of his speeches. Admiration of their minds is more subtle and almost as effective. The admiration may be genuine, the seduction mutual, honourable, and even beneficial and blessed. Corruption can be perfectly achieved by praise. At the other extreme is hard cash paid for services to be rendered.

This last is now regarded as dishonourable to both parties, but was not always so. Louis XI of France paid pensions to the Ministers of Edward IV of England, and the King's Chamberlain, Sir William Hastings, was wise and honest enough to have the payment recorded. Louis XIV did the same by King Charles II and his Ministers. Ambassadors, at all times, have been the recipients of favours and presents from the Court of the Sovereign to whom they were accredited. However, it would not do nowadays for Mr. Churchill to receive more than an autographed photograph from President Roosevelt or Comrade Stalin, though a miniature or an Order set in brilliants might, in old-fashioned style, be accepted from the Queen of Holland. Whatever were the relations between M. Laval and Signor Mussolini, we may take it that for the last 200 years no British statesman has taken money from a foreign government. It is not done ; it would not be understood !

What is done still is entertainment. I protested against Sir Austen Chamberlain, when Foreign Secretary, allowing himself to be entertained by General Pangalos in Greece, chiefly because I did not like the General, who had made himself dictator. I protested against the Czar being entertained here in 1906, Mannerheim in 1919, Mussolini in 1922, and the German Fleet in 1934. It is obvious now that I was right to object and protest ; but not on the ground that we might corrupt them ; rather the other way round.

#### PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

Hitler's invitations to and entertainment of Members of Parliament was far more deplorable. I suppose that not less than 50 British Conservative M.P.s visited Germany under such circumstances, to return singing Hitler's praises and to advertise his respect for English 'gentlemen' ! Mussolini did the same on a smaller scale. When the poor but honest Labour M.P. goes out to Poland, or Roumania, or Hungary, or Egypt, or India, at the expense of his hosts (who have invited him), to see for himself what is wrong, collect information and report, eyebrows are raised all over the House of Commons. "Not exactly bought, you know, but . . ." they seem to say. "In any case, we need not pay attention to what he says on the subject."

When I have visited America, Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia,

Poland, Roumania, South Africa and Palestine, to speak for the Zionists or the Single Taxers, they have always paid my expenses in the country, and often the fares out as well. But I was not, on those occasions, reporting to the House; I was merely a lecturer. I took good care, on visiting India, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria and Austria, even when reporting only for the Labour Party, to be free of all pecuniary obligations to anyone; and wherever, as in India, they insisted on paying my hotel bill or railway fare, I sent the equivalent to some local hospital or charity. Everybody, on both sides, is so suspicious in India. Some such rule for himself should be made by every M.P. Where work is done for an organization, or for one's own Government, one ought not to be out of pocket; but where a report is made to Parliament, get above suspicion even at a considerable personal sacrifice—and recoup, if possible, by articles in the Press or reviews.

Any change in our standards of what is honourable should be considered here on practical grounds. How far does such a change lessen the respect for Parliament and give Fascism a better ground for criticism? Standards do change—hitherto, I think, for the better. Let me instance the looting of India by the servants of the East India Company in the latter half of the 18th century. All the despised British Nabob did was (in accordance with Eastern practice) to accept and to expect presents. The rulers of Bengal gave Clive or Hastings a free run of their treasuries. Every Rajah and Zemindar bought protection from some Colonel or Collector, who then returned home as a millionaire 'Nabob'. What the native Indian princes bought was the privilege of continuing to extract for themselves 'presents' from their subjects.

So the farmers of the taxes in Bengal got translated into landlord Zemindars; and all the Princes acquired the right of owning land instead of owning serfs. 'Clemency' Canning, as a great act of grace, permitted the Talukdars of Oudh to remain like landlords because they had behaved like gentlemen.<sup>1</sup> The State which had owned all the land of India gave away half and considered itself generous instead of foolish.

Statesmen would not act so foolishly now, of course; but standards change for the better, even in India. When I was young the visitor to an Indian Prince was formally presented with the portable furniture of the rooms he occupied. His servants packed the hairbrushes and carpets as a matter of course. Nowadays he leaves the sheets, and merely fills his cigarette-case in a moment of absent-mindedness. It is impossible to understand Eastern life without realizing that presents take the place of taxes, rent, revenue—and income. All is customary and often reciprocal; and has nothing whatever to do with British law. It had a most demoralizing effect upon the honest Englishman. Nelson did well out of the King and Queen of Naples; but I am quite certain that no British Admiral in this war is making anything out of the King and Queen of Egypt.

Fox and Pitt graciously allowed friends to pay their debts. Nowadays Baldwin gives £150,000, and accepts an honourable pension from the State.

#### HONOURS EASY

Honours may be a means of rewarding the virtuous, and promise thereof persuade the intransigent. But the more common charge is that the bribery was the other way—that the politician bought his honours and paid

<sup>1</sup> During the Mutiny, 1857-8.

for them with a cheque signed in the name he proposed to use when in enjoyment of the peerage. Of course the money went only to Party funds. Nowadays the Parties are less hungry, 'honours agents' less accredited, and if any benefactors will secure a peerage, the beneficiaries are hospitals, universities and cathedrals. There is not much in all that for Fascists to seize upon. Their own leaders, in happier days, did not shrink from the thought of inducing sitting Members to resign in their favour. Other safe seats have been resigned for similar reasons, and the man in possession has given up his £600 a year for well-understood rewards with which intrinsic merit has little to do.

It may be that, so far as our Parliament is concerned, corruption offers little scope for Fascist denunciation. Local government is a little less clean, because contracts go often to local people and the ordinary councillor is concerned directly, with the executive, in the placing of contracts and the employment of labour. Also, there are fewer on any council than there are Members in Parliament, wherefore each one is more important for the job in hand. The Staffordshire County Council, on which I sat for many years, had as clean a record as Parliament itself; and I imagine that most county councils are better than city or borough councils just because the councillors are further removed from the cousins and friends who seek an unduly helping hand.

If, however, the permanent officials are crooked, whether at Westminster or in the provinces, then they may try to conceal their wicked ways by 'nobbling' inconvenient critics of their misdeeds. This, of course, can be done quite easily in the boroughs, by finding jobs for incompetent sons and daughters, whose chance of keeping the job depends on papa's future conduct. This method is unworkable at Westminster—first because the permanent officials fear the Press more than the few M.P.s who have special information, and secondly because one has to pass stiff examinations (in normal times) to get into the Civil Service at all, and, once in, cannot easily be turned out.

#### FASCIST PROPOSALS

The proposals of Fascism, or National-Socialism, intend the destruction of government by the people in order to substitute government by a Party, that Party having a leader, *Führer*, *Duce*, or *Caudillo*,<sup>1</sup> whose will is law and whose decisions are uncontrolled. The leader is intended to have advisers, selected by the leader, from all the various organizations and corporations—manufacturers, merchants, accepted Trade Unions, professions, services, etc., which build up a Corporative State. These may even be elected by the various Fascist corporations, but the advisers are responsible only to the Party leader and are to have no executive power save what he shall depute to each or any of them from time to time. In fact the Corporative State assembly meets only to listen to and applaud the speeches of the Master, when he desires to inaugurate a policy and requires acclaim as evidence of popular support. More and more the Masters prefer to use the wireless or the great annual meetings of the Party rather than this sham Parliament which might remind the people of other days.

All foreign trade is operated by the State, by means of barter with any other country embraced in the New Order. All foreign exchanges are

<sup>1</sup> It is strange that, while the German or Italian is content to be led by the nose, the Spaniard prefers to be kicked in the pants.

regulated by the State; all consumption is rationed; all the Press controlled; all activities outside the corporations are prohibited; all correspondence is subject to inspection; all legal safeguards concerning justice and individual liberty are subject to police permission; and the secret police control both the bureaucracy and the public. All education teaches the duty of obedience to the Master. All magistrates hold office only during 'good behaviour'. All strikes and lock-outs are illegal and wages are fixed by the various corporations, subject to the approval of the Master. There has never been anything like it in the world before, because no Emperor, King, or Dictator in the past ever had such police forces at his disposal to ensure obedience or chastise rebellion.

The citizen has no rights as against the State, no redress for wrong, no channel through which complaints can pass, and yet the majority of the German people presumably approve of what their *Führer* has done in these last ten years. Possibly they are hypnotized by his military success, but they seem satisfied also with the efficiency of order and discipline as contrasted with the dispute and disorder of liberty. Whether the Italian and the Spaniard and the Portuguese still prefer Fascism to liberty is more doubtful. Indeed, we cannot be sure even in the case of Germans, so fearful are they all of giving offence to the police-rulers. Let the critic imagine what he would do if a German, living in Germany today.

The essential feature of all Fascist rule is rule by the police through fear. The Master depends on the police. All the police have to fear is the Army, and then only when discipline breaks down. For the Army chiefs are as fearful of the police as are the plain citizens. One whisper and they vanish from command, if not from the sight of men.

#### THE POLICE STATE

In such a Police State, the only check on the bureaucracy is the omniscience of the Master and the police, themselves part of the bureaucratic rule. No free Press, no Parliament, no free Courts of Law exist to protect the subject or his property. Indeed, the subject becomes himself the property of the Master, to serve as and where required. Ostensibly he is given security of maintenance during pleasure in exchange for liberty—or as Fascists would ecstatically put it, in exchange for liberty to starve.

In such a State the whole bureaucracy must become incredibly corrupt, as in Czarist Russia. All promotion, being unchecked by any but Party or personal considerations, must produce both sycophancy and inefficiency; and every town and village will be lucky if its petty tyrant can, in any way, be 'liquidated'. In Italy the Church may exercise some restraining influence over the petty tyrant, the priest being still immune from tyranny. But in Germany and Spain even that check will be absent.

It is inconceivable that even the B.U.F. should wish to inflict such a Police State upon Britain. I suppose that Mosley hopes he could replace Parliament by a Corporative State Assembly, and rule through that Assembly without requiring control of our lives through police interference. He would allege that control of the education of youth in schools (and later in the Army) would produce such discipline that subsequent control would not need to be so severe as to amount to serfdom—that the perfectly trained citizen would be purged of all thought other than that acceptable to the State. "Give me the children," he would say, "from five to twenty. Their

parents will die off and my trained disciples will need no other discipline, and know no other example. I will make of them a warrior race equal to the heroes of Germany and Japan—happy, contented, and worshipping me.”

Of course I think a race of such robots, whether they talked English or Choctaw, ought to be in a lunatic asylum. But I am convinced that such a picture is pleasing to Fascist sympathizers of the governing class—so pleasing that they think we here, and Germans, Italians, etc., might quickly dispense with the Police State and revert to Arcadian simplicity. Mosley as the modern Cincinnatus hardly strikes me as well cast, and his police would be even more reluctant to suffer defenestration.

#### WHY FASCISM AND LIBERTY ARE INCOMPATIBLE

There have been more reasonable advocates of the Corporative State who would not have tolerated the idea of the Police State. Horatio Bottomley was always in favour of a Business Man's Government. He was shocked at the stupidity of professional politicians who objected to raising money by promises of lottery bonuses, and demanded a government composed of business men without constituents or conscience or responsibility to Parliament. Bottomley always had a very great 'Gallup Poll' following, till he defaulted on his lottery shares; and I always picture his Business Man's Government as resembling Mr. Bottomley.

Others have advocated that a reformed House of Lords should include representatives of all the professions and corporations, instead of representing noble families. There Bevin and Sir Walter Citrine would sit beside Mr. Montagu Norman and the President of the Chartered Accountants, and their authority would enact legislation beneficial to each trade and profession in turn; while no one would care to refer to the unfortunate consumer. The House of Commons is neglectful enough, but I fancy that our business chiefs, getting together 'in a huddle', would be ten times worse, whether called Corporative State or Syndicalists.

In any case, you cannot have your corporative State without an argus-eyed police force using DORA (the Defence of the Realm Act) in every commercial transaction. The essence of Corporation is that all in each Corporation should crystallize their existing practice, poach on no other member of the Corporation, sell at prices fixed by the Corporation, to people registered with the Corporation, and that anyone who blacklegs (*i.e.* breaks the Corporation's rules) should be called a racketeer and sent to gaol. The 'smelling out' of racketeers would certainly require an adequate police force whose operations, being ever more intimate, would qualify them to tie us all up in the final Police State.

Possibly the Fascist philosopher, if such there be, will reply that my objections to the policing of the Corporative State apply as strongly to all the P.E.P. (Political Economic Planning) of the various socialist schools of thought. Quite so; they do. But there is this to be said for the organizers of P.E.P. as distinguished from the organizers of Fascism: they do leave us a free Parliament to contrive checks on the police, and a free Press permitted to give publicity to their methods. It is the *dragonnades* of the Fascists, uncontrolled and working in darkness, from which one is most anxious to save one's fellow countrymen.

I have spoken of the possible Fascist philosopher. The remarkable fact is that there seems to be no philosophy in the British movement at all—



neither love of wisdom nor love of anything save hero-worship. 'Up Mosley, *ruat coelum*,'<sup>1</sup> is their first and last constructive aspiration. The rest is all hate and destruction. I cannot be wrong on this point, for my mail is both eloquent and conclusive. It is no protection that my grandmother was a Mosley of Rolleston.

So we are back where we began this chapter. Fascism attacks, or infiltrates through, any weakness in the democratic ranks. It is our supreme advantage in this struggle that we offer the enemy few weak spots, that the cries of corruption, of the Godless State, of Jew capitalists, still ring hollow in our ears. All prefer our old form of representative and responsible democracy—would that it could be more efficient and less a sham battlefield for Parties! We are also fortunate in that we are actually at war with Fascists, and they are doing their best to kill us. Such activity tends to make the other fellow's point of view unpopular.

#### BRIBERY OF THE ELECTORATE

We turn from contemplating the corruption of the politician to an examination of the corruption of the electorate by the politicians. Naturally Fascist indignation is less vocal. Fascists do not object to promising a new heaven and a new earth; that indeed is the professed aim of Fascism. They do not object to an open-handed candidate, or to the open purse of their Party. That the political worker is worthy of his hire, and a bit more in hand till he can take more by conquest, is the settled policy of the Fascists. No! the corruption of the electorate is a danger to democracy, for it causes honest democrats despair.

Let me say at once then that direct bribery by a candidate in order to get elected either to Parliament or to a Council has practically died out in my lifetime. In 1906 my borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme vied with Stafford, Shrewsbury, Worcester and Falmouth as the most corrupt in England. Men still told with some regret how, in earlier days, a £5 note lay on every freeman's breakfast table on election day. 'Clerical expenses' covered an extensive field in the expense return of my agent. Local elections were just as costly. All that has vanished, being quite useless with the immense increase in the numbers of expectant voters who would have to be accommodated. Election petitions have ceased to interest politicians and to employ lawyers. A change in habit has released political life from the curse of centuries. I doubt if even the Conservative Party now employ paid<sup>2</sup> canvassers; for they never get their money's worth at that game. Money spent by the Member between elections is not held to be bribery in law, wherefore football and allotment clubs still make certain calls and publish subscription lists.

The delightful legal distinction between 'bribery' by a candidate and 'generosity' by a Member was well illustrated when Sir Henry Buckingham, being M.P. for Guildford, gave a tea-party to cement his seat. Two days before the happy day Parliament was suddenly dissolved. Sir Henry became a mere candidate, but he had ordered the goods. The sandwiches had to remain uneaten, lest a rash mouthful should convert hospitality into bribery.

But real bribery died a peaceful death during the non-Party truce of the last war. It is most unlikely to be revived; and is the unexpected and satisfactory result of the widening of the voting franchise.

<sup>1</sup> 'Up Mosley, though the heavens crash.'

<sup>2</sup> Always illegal, but frequently winked at.

## BRIBERY AT THE PUBLIC EXPENSE

If the increase in number of the *plebs* has put *panem et circenses* beyond the reach of the privy purse, it has rather stimulated both candidates and Members to efforts in the same direction at the public expense. Personally, I believe what the bulk of the working class want is justice and not charity ; and that promises to increase the dole destroy both others' self-respect and one's own chance of re-election.

There has been so far no text-book printed on *How to Get Votes*. Yet, obviously, that is a question of prime interest both to democracy and to politicians. I commend the subject to the professors of Social Science, working in co-operation with the Gallup Polls. As one who has been exceptionally successful in the matter of collecting votes, let me give a few hints for the furtherance of the study.

(1) Fear is more potent than hope, as witness the 1924 'Red Letter' election and the 1931 'Inflation' election. Most people vote Conservative, through fear of Socialism ; that is why the Tory Press always called the Labour Party the 'Socialist' Party. If you tell your electors crudely that you will double the Old Age Pension you do not get more votes ; for those who are afraid are more numerous than those who are pleased. It is likewise stupid to hope to get votes for the taxation of Land Values by threatening landlords with the doctrine of 'ransom' ; for, immediately, thousands are afraid. Any plunge into the unknown must always lose votes to the plunger who bases his argument merely on the expediency of benevolence.

(2) Justice is more potent than expediency ; for indignation ranks next to fear in psychology. Indentured Chinese labour on the Rand was dubbed 'Chinese slavery' and indignation swept away the Conservatives in 1906. Two minor Acts of recent Parliaments which were manifestly unjust did not indeed wreck the Governments that passed the Acts because the unjust results were smothered under the gush of sentimental expediency, but both lost votes to the authors (and gave them to me as opposer). One was an Act to levy a special drainage rate on people who could not possibly benefit from the drainage. This did not directly affect any in my constituency, but the injustice did. The other was an Act to destroy slums and pay no compensation for the building, but only for the value of the site, which was not destroyed but left to the owner ! This Hilton Young Act was so unjust and ridiculous that the Act became a dead letter.

(3) The moral appeal is more potent than the material. When Mr. Lloyd George offered *9d.* for *4d.* in his Health Insurance Act, it was his enemies who shouted *9d.* for *4d.* ; and Mr. Lloyd George, swiftly changing his ground, argued the moral duty of the State and employer to contribute the *5d.* to the increased efficiency of the State and of the worker. No temperance legislation has any chance when not advocated on moral grounds ; and the moral wickedness of war was the main argument used by the 'appeasers' both in Britain and America, while the material side of the expense of war was kept carefully in the background.

(4) Altruism is more potent than the selfish appeal ; as witness the whole anti-slavery and aborigines protection movement. The desire to help Abyssinia and the Spanish Republican Government, which finally

wrecked the 'appeasers', was purely altruistic. We do our best to convince people that this war is to free humanity and to prove that we intend no material advantage to the United Nations. Hence the Atlantic Charter. Free Trade *v.* Protection was best advocated on grounds of morality.

- (5) Sincerity is more potent than oratory ; or
- (6) Honesty is more potent than ridicule ; or, indeed,
- (7) God is more potent than Mammon.

Obviously I could continue in this strain to extol the British electors, and inspire budding politicians with virtuous resolves, and guide the author of *How to Get Votes*. Honesty, however, compels me to admit that my wish that it may be so is all clouded with a doubt as to whether electors do reach these high levels. Mine did, of course ; but possibly elsewhere education has not yet penetrated far enough into the thick heads of the thoughtless.

Perhaps it is enough if the reader will say to himself : "Well, I hope he is right." Because that would mean that he wants democracy to survive. It cannot survive if I am wrong in believing that we move in that direction : that the Briton, long schooled in politics and morality, is more advanced than other electors, that education in Government of the people, by the people, for the people, does improve us all—through reason, in an atmosphere of freedom.

I am more likely to become right in my estimate of electors if other politicians seeking votes will judge electors according to my hints. For even electors tend to think and behave as others expect the best of them to react. Then we might even come to agree that faith is more potent than demagoguery.

If demagoguery is more potent than faith, Hitler wins. Fascists can beat us at that. They can debauch electors just as easily as the virtuous can raise their moral tone. Fortunately socialists are generally virtuous. When, waiting to rise and illumine the audience, I have to listen with mounting indignation to inexperienced comrades promising the moon, I prick their stuff with a parable, thus :

#### THE COW STORY

Count Leo Tolstoi once said : "I see all mankind as a herd of cattle inside a fenced enclosure. Outside the fence there lay green pastures and plenty for the cattle to eat, but inside there was not grass enough for the cattle, so that they trampled what there was under foot and gored each other to death in their struggle for existence ! Then," said Tolstoi, "I saw the owner of the herd come to them, and when he saw their pitiable condition he was filled with compassion for them and bethought himself of everything he could do to improve their lot. He called his friends together and asked them to help him cut grass from outside the enclosure and throw it over the fence to the cattle—and that they call Charity."

Then, because the calves were dying off and not growing up into serviceable cattle, he arranged that they should all have a pint of milk given them for breakfast :—Feeding of School-children. Because they were giving each other such terrible wounds in the struggle for existence he screwed corks on to the horns of the cattle so that the wounds they gave each other might be less dangerous :—Factory Laws. Because the cattle were dying off in the cold nights he put up beautifully well-drained and well-ventilated cow-

sheds for the cattle:—Housing Reform. He even went so far as to set aside part of the enclosure for the old bulls and cows to retire to in peace after they were 70 years of age.

"In fact," said Tolstoi, "he did everything he could think of to improve the condition of those miserable cattle. But when I asked him why he did not do the one obvious thing—break down the fence and let the cattle get out—he answered me: 'Because if I let them get out I should no longer be able to milk them'!"

That parable never fails to secure the tumultuous approval of a Labour audience and the silent discomfort of my 'constructive' colleagues. On the first of many occasions on which I told that story to the House of Commons Mr. James Keir-Hardie, the Socialist who wore a deer-stalker cap in the House to emphasize his politics, happened to be present. When I sat down he came across the floor to me, patted me on the shoulder and said: "Very good, young man; but you should remember that cows always come home to be milked." "Jamie," said I, "that is because they are cows. Suppose we put the brains of men into the heads of the cattle, and then leave them to look after themselves." Keir-Hardie was a Scot before he was a Socialist, and never bowed the knee to the Fabian Society.

There are two morals I would draw from that story. First, that the British working class do not like the kindness, care and attention of those politicians who seek with equal persistence both to do them good and to win their votes. Secondly, that the education of the electorate is the only key to advance. I would add that it is the only salvation from Fascist retrogression.

## CHAPTER NINE

### IS DEMOCRACY INEFFICIENT?

*"There comes a cry most appealing to youth: give us more efficiency; get something done; stop this long-drawn-out parliamentary and congressional debate; act!—and they say to us 'Look at Italy'."*

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER, 1934.

THERE is no yardstick by which we may measure inefficiency. But the more the spotlight of publicity is thrown upon any government, the less inefficiency there is and the more inefficiency is seen. We naturally judge by what we can see and without publicity we can see nothing. Even if we feel personally the clashing of the cogs of the machine, without the power to make public, we were wiser to keep our feelings to ourselves, for, where there is no publicity there are always police. Thus *ipso facto* the dictator escapes both criticism and publicity. 'He' has only to say he is efficient and to publish selected evidence. Meanwhile democracy's faults are exposed to all of us.

Dictatorship ought to be most efficient in preparing for and waging war. After all, war is the dictator's business. War is alien to a democratic and educated people. It is not surprising that, at war, educated people show inefficiency. It requires defeat upon defeat before America, Britain, China, or even Russia, can change their amateurishness.

## INEFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICES

Whether under a dictator or a responsible government, the machine is in fact managed by the Civil and Military Services. The problem therefore which we have to face is this: which best controls and stimulates the bureaucracy, a dictator or a many-headed government responsible to Parliament?

Broadly speaking, the efficiency or inefficiency of all service depends upon the fear of reprimand felt by the servant, qualified by his willingness to take risks in the interests of his service. 'Safety first' is the worst and most usual counsellor for all servants. A rash servant no doubt makes mistakes and is 'fired'; a wise servant waits for orders, and is guilty of no mistakes. Reluctance to make decisions is therefore natural, both in the services and in business; and the further away the directing head, the more delay there must be, the less the directing head will know of the matter in question, and the more inefficient will be the service or business.

The managing director of a limited company, secure in his position, is such a directing head. (No doubt he keeps a Board of Directors to help him say 'No'; but normally they leave most decisions to him.) The owner of a private business has all the right, and power, of decision. Both these 'heads' are reasonably close to the matters to be decided; both can delegate decision within the limits they lay down. On such delegation the success of the business depends. Bernard Baruch, most successful of business men, is supposed to have explained his success thus: "I tell my young men what I want, and then put my feet on the desk and read the newspaper."

## THE PRIME MINISTER

The managing director of the Services is the Prime Minister, not quite so secure as the managing director with a contract, or as the head of a private firm, perhaps not so secure as a Dictator; but only the House of Commons can dictate to him. Final decisions have to be his; he must ever decide, ten times a day, between those rivals 'Safety First' and 'Rashness'—between Discretion and Valour. He too will delegate much to the Parliamentary Heads of Departments—some policy and much action. Lord Baldwin, in my opinion, delegated too much, Mr. Churchill perhaps too little. Mr. Gladstone . . .

No! It is not really a question of how much the Prime Minister delegates. The amount really depends, not on what the Prime Minister wishes, but on how much his Ministers are afraid of him. They were terribly afraid of Mr. Gladstone; they are afraid of Mr. Churchill. Each one he removes leaves the rest more afraid—unless he can get it into their heads that the victims were removed (and will be removed) not because they acted without consulting him, but because they *did* consult and *should* have themselves decided. If you want initiative and decision, you must 'sack' those who are afraid of you. It is the 'yes-men' and 'noddors' who create inefficiency.

What I have said about Prime Ministers and business heads applies equally to Department Chiefs. They must be feared for the right reason, if the sub-department chiefs are to make decisions on their own. This action is hardly ever taken; for it is also human nature to get as much power as possible for oneself, and the stupid human animal, thinking mainly of his

dignity and power, objects to delegating authority. Discipline enters into the picture, and thought goes out; the more as one goes lower down. But the foreman who oils the wheels himself is a fool. Ultimate efficiency comes from the encouragement of freedom; inefficiency from discipline and ignorance—from fear of the 'boss' and of taking action.

#### INEFFICIENCY OF DICTATORS

If all agree, as they should, with this analysis of the cause of inefficiency, it is clear that a dictatorship should breed an inefficient public service—more inefficient than a democracy. For everybody under a dictator must fear—fear to delegate and fear to decide. The dictator cannot be omniscient. He must also be limited in choice of his servants, limited to those personally loyal to himself, not always the most ready thinkers. So it goes on, all down the ladder. Nor is there any spotlight on the conduct of any of his subordinates, save the secret police reports. A free rein to jealousy, suspicion and favouritism must destroy the morale and efficiency of any service.

When Hitler dismisses half a dozen Generals, what are the feelings of the others and of those who take their place? Fear of the same fate. How avoid it? By blaming others, and obeying orders—however inappropriate under changed circumstances. Balaclava was magnificent; but, as somebody remarked, it was not war! It is not obeying orders, but disobeying orders which marks the true soldier. Initiative is never encouraged by fear. Napoleon's method was sensible. He dismissed Generals who lost battles, saying in reply to the most convincing explanations of innocence: "I cannot afford to keep Generals who are unfortunate, because their misfortune affects the confidence of their men." The test was simple—not 'was it your fault?', but 'was it a misfortune?'

#### NEW DEPARTMENTS

Good officers, proud of their profession, full of the tradition of enterprise, will, however, often rise above considerations of 'safety first'. That is probably the secret weapon of German military success. It is certainly our naval tradition, and explains our Empire. But for that success, the officers must have pride in their profession and well-selected traditions. Pride in the profession of serving in the Ministry of Transport and a knowledge of its noble traditions cannot be acquired in a day. Ministries of mushroom growth are not the Treasury, nor even the Board of Trade. As we descend to such murky shallows as the Ministry of Food, we can hardly expect to find corporate pride, the team spirit, or even the loyalty to risk rebuke in the interests of the service. There 'caution', 'safety first', and 'reference back' will rule supreme. A shiver passes through the whole office when a newspaper man is reported on the threshold. I hasten to add that I know nothing of Lord Woolton's department; this is a purely imaginary reconstruction (as of a dinosaur from a knuckle-bone) and intuition.

The point I wish to make is that the newest and more inexperienced Departments will not have 'a clean slate' and therefore move swiftly. The absence of precedents and of a certain definite hierarchy produce the inefficiency of a Ministry of Information. A dull intellect could take on the job of President of the Board of Education. His experienced officials know the ropes, have an *esprit de corps*, are co-operating rather than competing;

they have definite work to do, and no time to worry about whether they can conscientiously hold on to a job whose services nobody seems to require. But it requires a genius to take charge of a new Department, and construct it, and dovetail new men into a harmonious machine. He must wring necks and shake hands almost simultaneously to produce anything like a loyal team anxious to achieve a collective success.

That is why any visitor inspecting a new Department should cast his eye round the office walls for a chart-diagram showing how authority is delegated, and the hierarchy of reference. That is why the new Minister of such new Department should summon all officials on the chart and lecture them collectively. He should outline what they should decide and what refer to him—threatening dire penalties on those who will not decide and prefer to evade. He should invite and answer all questions, even with the frank admission, "We shall soon find out." Then he should do the same with all the second in command of the various sections, to clear his mind, to give them hope of promotion, and to discover the best material for promotion. They are all new boys at a new school, and so is the Minister—all finding out for the first time and feeling their feet.

Unfortunately, every department is full of officials with too little work to do—their ambition to grab work from the others. All dig themselves into a new unconnected trench of their own. The only cure I know is a Treasury demand for a 10 per cent reduction in cost, either by reducing all salaries or getting rid of 10 per cent of the staff. Let the Minister decide; it will generally result in a reduction of staff, and always in an increase of efficiency.

Whether under a dictatorship or under a democracy, the ambition of youth and age is a Government job, and once in that job, to hold it. It can best be held by becoming a specialist with records. As soon as it is said, "Oh, So-and-so knows all about rabbits," he has his little niche. The next step for him is to acquire a staff, and add dormice to rabbits. As soon as he has a well-paid staff, then—to use an expression familiar to the French bureaucracy, *'renvoyez l'ascenseur'*, i.e. send down the lift again, for a rise in the specialist's own salary to match that of his assistants. Nothing can stop the cocoon winding its own protection, except publicity and the vigilance of the Minister and the Treasury.

Now there is no publicity under a dictatorship, and less vigilance if the official is 'of the party'; none at all if he has a brother in the Secret Police. Possibly for a time, under the inspiration of a new faith, officials may cease to be human and seek only the advantage of the State. That rarely happens even here, and I cannot imagine it happening in Italy or Germany. Anything seems possible in Russia, even to an official admitting to his chief that his typist could do his job.

#### PROFESSIONAL OR AMATEUR ?

"But," chorus the Fascists, "look at the German roads, look at the Pontine marshes; the Italian trains run to time, the German Army is the most efficient in the world. Their education of the young may in your judgment be damnable, but you can't say it is not efficient."

Those are the results which are shown and advertised. I do not know—I do not suppose anyone does—whether equal efficiency pervades all services in Germany and Italy. But I think one reason for greater efficiency in Germany than here may be that we are amateurs while Germans are



professionals. That is certainly true of the Army officers. Ever since warfare became a science it has needed exceptional Generals—Cromwell, Marlborough, Clive and Wellington—to enable us to win land battles.

It may also be true of Civil Administration and business management. The German *Bürgermeister*, head of all city management, is not an amateur Mayor chosen annually, but a permanent trained official. There are probably text-books and university lectures for budding *Bürgermeister*s; possibly no one can become *Bürgermeister* without a university degree in Town Mastership. I know of no text-books or degrees here, whether for Mayors or Town Clerks. From the sublime to the ridiculous, I know of no dissertation on 'How a Minister of the Crown should build up a New Department of State' to equal the instructional and thought-provoking suggestions of this chapter! But I have no doubt that Nazi professors have produced text-books on Bureaux of far greater thoroughness. There are excellent books in English on Business Management; but it is doubtful whether one managing director in ten has ever read them. We find our own way, at considerable expense to our country. No doubt by finding our own way we learn the job of management better in the end, provided the end does not arrive in 'sticky' fashion before the job is learnt.

There is a good deal in being 'a gentleman'; but there is no sound ground for supposing that a gentleman must be ignorant. He can acquire the merits of the professional without sacrificing decent feelings. The Fascists, clamouring for dictatorship and efficient state-management, seek to turn gentlemen into professionals, without preserving the English gentleman's decency or honesty. It must take many generations of Quisling rule before Englishmen will do the goose-step with both efficiency and pride. If we have to choose between the two futures—Fascism and efficiency *or* freedom and pride—the dumb Anglo-Saxon gentleman will prefer the latter. But I see no reason for forcing any such preference. In the long run, dictatorship, censorship, police and favouritism must destroy any book-learnt efficiency and must produce corruption and decay—even in the German Army. Jena followed within 20 years the death of Frederick the Great.

#### FROM PERICLES TO STALIN

The lesson of history is everywhere the same. The free democracies of Greece were replaced by tyrants and fear. The free cities of Italy sank under tyrants and fear. In each case it took many years before the virtues of freedom died out, but fear did kill them in the end. Corruption grew with luxury; the arts died of sycophancy; inefficiency rotted government. How should it be otherwise, if Britain, Holland and America followed Greece, Lombardy and Rome into tyranny? In each of the three classical cases it was the longing for a 'strong' government inspired by fear which swept away popular rule. Sometimes it was fear of outside aggression, and sometimes fear of internal dissensions and revolts, which produced the change. Ever it was the insecurity of property. We see exactly the same factors operating in our last remaining free countries. Fear of revolution in the German Reich produced Ebert, Hitler and the Nazi cult; the same fear in Italy produced Mussolini and Fascism; fear of unemployment and the insecurity of privilege operates to create Mosley and Father Coughlin and whoever it was or is in Spain, Montreal, Argentina, Portugal, Venezuela and Greece.

Each time we get the same cause—fear; the same denunciation of free

institutions; the same demand for strong government; and the same cry of inefficiency, corruption and injustice. Every grievance is pointed out as the fault of Government; all will be righted by the beneficent dictator; 'spoils to the victors' will but redress past spoliation.

There was one country where Government was not democratic, and never had been. There corruption and injustice reigned supreme; there inefficiency was so exposed in the last war that Czarist dictatorship broke hopelessly before the revolutionary Party rule of the Bolsheviks. Whatever the victorious Party did could not have been worse than that which went before. As it were by the act of God, two succeeding dictators happened to have an altogether altruistic and fiery faith in Communism. With no vested interests in the way, working on a clean slate, but working up from nothing, Lenin and Stalin produced and educated a new world of miraculous morale, where, at present, most civic, even Christian virtues find their zenith. It is this new world which is now, by its morale, saving the old. But, when the war is won and peace returns, such virtues cannot endure under a dictatorship. I believe Stalin sees this danger, and for that reason started those trial trips of a free representative assembly, elected on the English model by equal electoral districts. If, before he dies, he can establish such an institution in the affections of the Soviet people, he will save them from the risks which will inevitably follow his demise or disappearance. The Age of the Antonines lasted two generations. May he remember that the Antonines were followed by Commodus.

In any case, let not the one existing good dictatorship blind us to the fact that all others have destroyed democracy; and that in doing so they have increased, not decreased, corruption, inefficiency and injustice. Government of the bureaucracy, by the bureaucracy, for the bureaucracy, is the only alternative to that which 'shall not perish from the earth'.

#### PERIL THROUGH FEAR

One word more on these other dictatorships which we have escaped. The Fascist Party could never have won on grievances and election abuse alone. In every case they have had behind them not only the money, but the weapons that money can buy—Press, Police and Army. That money came from the wealthy who feared the people—feared Socialism or Communism, and had little love or understanding of democracy. Against this towering crashing wave of propaganda, those who love freedom have had only feeble reason and old traditions to oppose. Until Britain was pushed over the brink into war against dictators on September 3, 1939, the Fascist onrush was welcomed by those who should have protected us and who had all but sunk the good old cause. Whatever be the result of this war, it can hardly be worse than that from which we barely escaped in September 1939; and at the worst, before Freedom dies, she will have a decent curtain.

That this almost universal fear, possessing the governing class and driving them to abandon democracy, has not sunk us before now, we owe mainly to those who finally forced us into active war. Had we not broken away from appeasement, had we not by violent war bound patriotism to the cause of Freedom, democracy had now been dead and our people slaves.

In the cloister reason may answer fear; but for the mass reason alone is not enough, even in the steady Protestant world of Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians. The desertion of all our traditions and ethical standards by

the bulk of the educated and governing class came at a time when the eyes of the working class were still closed. That danger was immense in 1939, but they are closed no longer. Propaganda has swung round to denunciation of tyranny and inhumanity; the Church has rallied to liberty; Fascism has ceased to be fashionable. Above all, the object lesson of the immense morale of the Russian 'proletariat' has enlightened mankind, of all classes and parties. The revolution in our governing class, the love-day between labour and capital, is well illustrated by the almost hysterical welcome of Sir Stafford Cripps to power. One may observe the claims made by all party partisans that he is really at once a Conservative, a Liberal, a Socialist, and a Communist. I am content that he is a good son of Parliament, and independent of every Party.

If our survival as a free people is due mainly to Russian courage and example, only revealed at last in December of 1941, let not those who love democracy forget the luck which saved the cause for the preceding eight years. If freedom had to have deadly enemies, could she have chosen more happily than Mussolini, Hitler, Mosley, Franco, Quisling, Laval and 'Father' Coughlin? Had she had to choose her paladins, she might have chosen better Generals, but could she have chosen statesmen more inspiring and resolute than Chiang Kai-shek, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin? Luck, as well as reason and example, have been on our side, but it is not altogether luck that throws up fools among the Fascists and men among democracy.

Fascists have, however, infected another body of slightly more intelligent people with this idea of the inefficiency of Parliament. Socialist, Communist and syndicalist youth, of the 'For-God's-sake' type, clamour for legislation to *make* a new world. They see Parliament as an obstructive body of old men blocking the way. "Get something done!" they cry. "Act! Enact!" They have, or had, a plan. When the Labour Party got a real majority, they would pass an Enabling Act putting the power of devising laws in the hands of their new Government without all the paraphernalia of three readings, Committee and Report stages in two Houses of Parliament. No debate! Act!

This is, of course, a wide extension of Administrative Law, taking the power of making law from the hands of Parliament and putting it into the hands of the Departments. They see Parliament as a machine for making laws—do not distinguish between Parliament and Government, do not understand the role of Parliament as a check on Government.

For a free Parliament is not a machine for making laws; it is a machine for *preventing* Government from making laws. It is the only check upon the Departments—perhaps not the only check so long as there remains a free Press. But a free Press could not endure here, any more than in Russia, once the Departments had power to draft, enact and enforce laws without leaving power to amend or reject in Parliament.

What would happen at the present time were the Government empowered to enact without consulting Parliament? Just think what the Home Office, or Board of Trade, or Ministry of Food would do to us if there were no Parliament to check their enterprise! The Press would not dare to call its type its own. The vested interests, which include the Services, through private interviews with Ministers and officials, would have it all their own way. That is a dictatorship; that is Fascism; the Police State.

Thanks to private Members of Parliament, we can control the appetite of bureaucracy to control us. We can prevent and amend their laws. So we

should think of Parliament as a reasoning machine for stopping laws being made by Government—that is by the bureaucrats. The ignorant critics think of Parliament as a machine for making laws. Thank heaven it is not! My personal opinion is that there are already too many laws and regulations and officials—and even gaols. I would use publicity and public opinion much more, and law much less, especially for unsocial offences, such as black-marketing, looting, slacking, shoplifting and profiteering. Publish their names and addresses, label their houses, and put them in the pillory for 24 hours!

The Departments would no doubt like to put Parliament on the shelf, and retain a government unhampered by Parliament. Certainly the War Office and Colonial Office have 'had about enough' of Parliament. No doubt the Government itself always prefers that Parliament should adjourn for long holidays. But neither the free Press nor the free electors care for Parliament to be put into cold storage and to have to face Government alone. Parliament and Government are not the same thing. One is a check upon the other; and both need to be efficient—one restraining by reason, the other executive by force.

## CHAPTER TEN

### PARTY AND DISCIPLINE

*"The man who will not investigate both sides of a question is dishonest."*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

WE have considered the dangers to democracy in general, and to our parliamentary form of Government in particular—caused by place-men, corruption in public life and inefficiency in Government. All these lead the benevolent to blaspheme and provide food for Fascists.

Let us now consider the danger arising out of Party solidarity and discipline; whither Party violence leads, or has led, in other lands, and in other times. Obviously Party has much to do with all the vices and dangers already described: as, obviously, Fascist 'order' or Bolshevik rule is Party rule.

### HISTORY OF PARTY

There has been no history or study of Party growth in England. Mr. Keith Feiling has published a *History of the Tory Party* covering a century and a half. But a history of Party growth in England—its organization, regulations and corruptions—has been and will remain impossible till the *History of Parliament* is finished. At present one can only say that ever since it started in 1265, every House of Commons has contained two Parties—those who were for and those who were against the King's Ministers of the time. Neither party had much cohesion and those against the Ministers waited wisely for a lead. Neither Party had principles, save loyalty to some magnate with whom they were connected by blood, neighbourhood or patronage. All used violence rather than argument.

The patron-magnate, whether lay or clerical, sat mostly in the Upper Chamber; and the clients in the Lower House probably boarded at the

magnate's Inn. The policy and party of the magnate were determined by his personal relations with the King's Ministers.

For the first two hundred years of Parliament the magnates and their purely selfish parties were alone of importance. But the frequent opposition of magnates to the King and the King's Ministers served to secure for Parliament the right to impeach Ministers and for the Commons power to check taxation. Eight times Parliament changed the Ministers (1315, 1326, 1376, 1388, 1399, 1450, 1455, 1461); five times it dethroned Kings (1326, 1399, 1461, 1470, 1471). The Lords Ordainers, the Lords Appellant, York and Lancaster, were all definite parties with their adherents or servants in either House of Parliament. From 1377 onwards the King's hold upon the Commons was strengthened by the presence in the House of many of his servants; and the Opposition Lords saw to it that their servants were there also.

But this was violent partisanship, rather than a principled party—an affair of the upper classes. The Members for the Cities of London and York might take sides; but the ordinary burgesses, who constituted the mass of the House of Commons, usually avoided such dangerous sport and conformed in each Parliament to the side in the ascendant. Popular feeling there was, chiefly anti-French and pro-war; but those elected to Westminster were mainly interested in avoiding taxation and in attempting to make the King live 'on his own'. Acts of Resumption of grants made to the King's friends became a normal way of securing both economy and vengeance.

#### PARTY BASED ON PRINCIPLES

The anarchy of the Wars of the Roses left the magnates in ruins and the Crown supreme. The King and his Parliament now blessed and helped each other, largely at the expense of the Church. The new solidarity of the Kingdom had reached completion by the death of Henry VIII (1547). A very short struggle of Protestant against Catholic was followed by the present and perpetual struggle between Conformists and Non-conformists, which was the foundation of Parties based on public policy and private principle. They might call themselves Catholic and Puritan, or Court and Country, or Cavalier and Roundhead, or Abhorrrers and Exclusionists, or Tory and Whig, or Conservative and Liberal—but there was ever a Right and a Left Party in both Houses and in the country.

If I were asked to date the genesis of political Parties in England I would say 1553, when John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, first beat upon the Protestant drum and got a House of Commons to his taste. Before 1620, no organized attempt took place to get constituencies to elect Members because of their views on public policy. Even down to the Revolution of 1688 the personality of the candidate, and not the Party label, remained the chief issue at every election. Till then no Whig called himself Whig, and no Tory, Tory; those were the terms of abuse used by the other side. So today all the Tory Press label the Labour M.P.s not 'Labour', but 'Socialist'; and I speak of the 'Tory' Press, whereas *The Times* would like to call itself 'the accredited organ of the National Government'.

From the Whig Revolution of 1688 to the Hanoverian succession in 1714, Whig and Tory fought remorselessly in every constituency with the slightest claim to a free electorate. Each new House of Commons purged itself of its defeated opponents by sham election petitions which the House decided

on Party lines. But though the mob knew whether it was 'red' (Tory) or 'orange and blue' (Whig), I have found no trace of anything in the nature of a Party Whip before the time of George III, when the handful of Whig M.P.s were urged by letters from their leader to attend for some special debate. In fact, till the great Reform Bill abolished rotten boroughs (1832), not half the constituencies enjoyed the remunerative pleasure of going to the poll at any general election; and no list of the Members elected would show each man's Party label. Each Member's party affiliation has to be discovered from his votes in Parliament, until Dod's *Guide* first appeared in 1835; and even Dod, as late as 1859, is often content to give the label 'Liberal-Conservative', or 'Reformer'.

#### PARTY ORGANIZATION

The national organization of the Conservative Party started in 1867; the national organization of the Liberals did not become effective till Schnadhorst organized Birmingham about 1876, and my uncle Stuart Rendel did the same by Wales in 1880-5. The Labour Representation Committee started work in 1900 and the 'Labour Party' finally united Socialist and Trade Unionist in 1910. I doubt if the use of the expression 'Chief Whip' for the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury can be traced before 1880, and I feel certain that neither Mr. Gladstone nor Mr. Parnell would ever have countenanced the vulgarity. Lord Richard Grosvenor was always spoken of by name; his successor, Arnold Morley, was called 'Chief Whip'. When I was born there were no daily 'whips' or 'whips' office, nor party endorsement of candidates, nor P.P.S.s to arrange tea on the Terrace, nor party funds to print posters—and gentlemen of the House of Commons spoke little, questioned little, came down to the House after dinner, and behaved with the decorum of the present House of Lords.

All this changed about 1880. The general election of that year was the first occasion of the publication of a map of England showing the political parties returned for each constituency. Mr. Gladstone's Parliament, 1880-5, was the first in which Party discipline developed, and Party 'whips' began to be sent out with regularity. The power was first given to Mr. Speaker to closure debate, March 18, 1887. These developments were caused by the obstructionist tactics of the Irish Party under Mr. Parnell. Parnell had succeeded Mr. Isaac Butt in 1878, and had determined to stop parliamentary government until the Act of Union was repealed. It was a way of black-mailing democracy. This closing of debate, and creation of rigid Party discipline, not only among Parnell's own followers, but among Government supporters, was the first grave blow at parliamentary democracy.

This short excursus into history is necessary to show how ancient are differences of opinion between Englishmen who are met together to argue and to reason; and how recent and upstart is the Party machine in our conception of Government. The various Senates, Parliaments or Assemblies which arose abroad like mushrooms in the 19th century split up at once into well-defined and logical Parties. Only the American Congress adopted by chance, and adhere to with wisdom, Party labels which have no relation to Left or Right politics. The differences between the 'Greens' and the 'Blues' of the Byzantine hippodrome were not less defined or more bitter than the differences today between Republican and Democrat. But the orderly and logical German Reichstag had from its very start in 1871 each grade of

political thought tied up and docketed in its appropriate pigeon-hole or sheep-pen—Conservative, National Liberal, *Centrum*, *Freisinnige*, Social-Democrat, etc. The Continent had no background of independence of Party and individual dignity. It is to that background of individual dignity that we might so easily revert if we could expose and destroy the domination of Party bosses. Indeed, it is in that direction that we must move if Party violence is not to destroy democracy.

The Liberal Party and its organization are dead ; but Liberalism survives, not alone in the Labour Party. Twenty-five years of Tory rule has resulted in honeycombing the Tory Party in the House of Commons with men of Liberal mind, who would in other days have sat as Liberals. Now they sit uncomfortably yoked to some local caucus of grumbling, inadequately instructed Colonel Blimps. These Tory caucuses are mostly Fascist in their sympathies, but their representatives in the House move increasingly in the other direction. The rebellion of the Commons on May 8, 1940, was an exasperated revolt against their Party masters—against all of them, from David Margesson in the Whips' Office to the octogenarian caucus chairman at Bumpkin Hall who desired from his Member only adequate contributions to the Party fund and complete confidence in Mr. Chamberlain. The Conservative organization is not yet liquidated, but, outside the machine, many of its victims hold it worthy of liquidation.

A growing number of Labour electors and Members of Parliament feel the same about their Party Organization. When the last war ended, the shattered Labour Party, shorn of its leaders, survived in opposition to the great coalition, put up a good fight, and won through as the only surviving group of radicals. But in 1919 the great Trade Union leaders were not sharing in the Coalition Government and had no responsibility for it. Then, the Communists of Russia were a despised and impotent body of aliens. When the next peace comes, the position of the Labour Party may well be that of the Liberal Party in 1919. May the result of their rigid and undemocratic rules and expulsions be a warning to their communist successors on the Left ! Neither dictators nor dictatorial Parties can survive indefinitely in the atmosphere of free Parliaments.

#### PARTIES AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Alternating Liberal and Conservative Governments (the rotatory system of Spain) lead to rigid Parties under whips and caucuses. Therefore we may see one merit in the present One-Party rule—it breaks Party discipline, develops initiative and sacrifice, and inspires the public to demand independence. To preserve their Party, the Liberals demanded Proportional Representation in 1918 ; to preserve theirs, the Labour Party will presently make the same demand. All over the Continent, while Parliaments endured, Party machines demanded, and often obtained, Proportional Representation. To preserve their Parties they destroyed their Parliaments. Party machines are not so popular in England that we should even wish to preserve them—much less do so by the sacrifice of our responsibility to our constituents. Who would want to represent Party, when he might represent Newcastle-under-Lyme !

As a cynic, as well as an optimist, I can assure those who fear we may sink through Party into Fascism that there is no possibility of P.R. ever becoming law in Great Britain. It is not because intelligent people distrust



Parties. The reason is much more conclusive. At present each individual Member of Parliament has a freehold property in his seat, which he has no intention of giving up for a doubtful place on a Party List.

The same almost ferocious resentment would be felt by the constituencies. Does anyone suppose that the electors of the aforesaid ancient Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme would tolerate being merged in Stoke-on-Trent, and enjoy having a fifth share in electing five Members? To have the town's own representative in Parliament is the town's valuable privilege; just as valuable as is the seat to that representative. For that reason, no syndicalist or fascist or totalitarian substitute for our Parliament, however truly representative on paper of the interests of producers or of Parties, has even an arguable chance in England. 'Many men,' said Cromwell, 'have gone about to break Parliament, and in the end Parliament hath broken them.' Why? Because the public have become so used to talking of and counting on 'our Member' that they would feel lost and desolate if he were taken from them. He is Appeal Court, nurse and whipping-boy, even if he has ceased to be almoner.

#### THE GERMAN MADNESS

The absence of this personal touch and dependence in most other countries has been almost a determining factor in the destruction of their Parliaments. It is possible that M. Heriot was proud to represent Lyons, of which he had been Mayor, and that the citizens of Lyons took a pride in him. But what did the citizens of Paris know or think of the Socialist elected for the *X<sup>me</sup> Arrondissement*? Bethnal Green knows its M.P.; but Bethnal Green is not a number.

France, however, having done its best for Parties with *Scrutin de liste* and second ballot, did settle down to the representation of areas and not of Parties. But post-war Germany, obsessed by Party and mathematics, devised a system of Party Proportional Representation which guaranteed only the certain election of the Party 'bosses'. Nothing more calculated to destroy any contact between the people and Government ever came out of Bedlam. All representation was put into the hands of the co-opted Party caucus. The Thuringian Circle elected, say, fifteen Members to the Reichstag. Each of half a dozen parties drew up lists of fifteen candidates. The electors did not even know their names; they could not pick out their friends; they just voted for one or other of the half-dozen lists, the Party having already arranged the order of the names on the list. Mathematics then determined that the first five Socialists, four Nazis, three National Liberals, two Communists, and one Democrat were elected to represent Thuringia. Thus the caucuses of the five lucky Parties decided *who* should go to the Reichstag. He might come from Silesia or Hamburg, but he represented Thuringia by the gift of his Party. As there were some ineffective votes, for Free Conservatives or *Centrum*, these were not wasted, but were added to other remnants elsewhere, and if the total exceeded some quota number, that Party got a special representative thrown in extra, representing nowhere in particular.

By-elections take place in England on a Member's death or retirement or promotion to the Lords. These elections are well reported and educate and guide public opinion as to the Government's activities. Also the candidates get to know something about politics and their people. Death or retirement

of a Member caused no by-election in Germany (any more than they do in America). The Party to which the deceased belonged took the next man on their original list for that circle.

#### THE REICHSTAG DIED

Think what such elections mean! The candidates are no doubt known to the audience, though not their place-number on the list. They all speak to the same Party programme; they answer questions in the Party formula; no individual appeal is possible; one Party Address suffices for the whole country. The same people were re-elected every four years; no one could claim support as a 'Thuringian man for Thuringia'. It was just one Gallup Poll after another, a competition of platforms, not of men. And to get on the list one had to be just a useful man to the Party, not to the country—loyal to the Party boss, with no ties to any constituents who were not of the Party. When they all vanished in 1933, who cared?

During those fatal fourteen years, German Parties were as resolute as any religion, as full of hate as any bigot; they fought for conversion not comprehension. Germany was split from top to bottom, and every man knew to which faith he belonged. The various professional leaders faced each other like Generals in hostile armies, claiming a share of power based only on the voting strength of their army. In that sort of Thirty Years' War, reasoned argument and conscience played no part at all. In the Reichstag itself the men told off to speak by the Party stated the case of the Party for the Party, and after consultation in private with the Party. No one else could speak at all. Nor did the followers of one Party ever mix in public or in private with the followers of the better Parties; any such action would have suggested treachery.

This is a terrible picture; and ever and again I see our own decent liberal-minded Labour Party being edged towards the same abyss in our own comfortable Parliament. For, truth to tell, leaders must always be tempted to secure discipline and their own convenience at the expense of the country. They, too, fear competition; they have a vested interest to protect. They closed the doors in Germany; they sealed the mouths; they counted votes. Then came one who counted not votes but guns. We, here, had better not go Party-mad like Germany. We had better realize before it is too late that Party loyalty shuts out better loyalty, is dangerous to democracy, and destroyed German freedom.

While the Weimar Republic was the worst case of Parties run mad, all the other European democracies which have now vanished moved more or less in the same direction. Leaders found they could control their followers and their electors more conveniently by Party discipline. They saw no danger in the increase of their own security. The Socialists of Vienna saw no danger in giving priority housing to members of the Party. The nearer the Fascist monster came, the more the sheep huddled together and the tighter they controlled their own, in order to avoid desertion and treachery. Round and round ran the sheep-dogs, while the wolf licked his chops. When he pounced, the victims were still thinking in numbers and sheltering under law and precedent. How should they know that in cultivating Party their Parliament had lost all roots in the land and among the people?

Wherefore I think Party solidarity, with the contempt and discontent it engenders, with its challenging invitation to Fascism to act on the same

lines with greater thoroughness, with its suppression of individual freedom of debate, with its destruction of the link between the electors and the elected, with its emasculation of Parliament by discipline and the foreclosing of government by reason, to be the gravest and the most dangerous enemy to democracy.

How then shall we view the prospective development of this evil in our own land, and what can be done to check the danger? The hopeful features are the very recent emergence of the Party caucus, the prospect of many years of one-Party rule, the disasters to democracy which have resulted from the Party spirit, the innate British dislike of discipline and centralization.

The machine began to operate in 1885 after the grant of manhood suffrage; it was obviously the result of the large increase of the electorate in need of education and ripe for organization. The rise coincided with an acute political controversy and was swift and sure. In 1890 W. S. Caine, a good radical who had been liberal-unionist and regretted it, resigned his seat that he might be re-elected as an independent. He was popular and had everything in his favour, especially the honest determination to play fair with his constituency. He was defeated by the Party machine, and all similar cases have met the same fate, down to the Duchess of Atholl in 1939. I decided to refuse to resign in 1919 when I left the Liberal for the Labour Party, because I had stated in my election address that I held myself free to ally myself with any who might share my views. Till the very outbreak of war the Party machines were as resolute as ever, and there was hardly a Member for a popular constituency who could label himself as independent because he had not accepted the assistance of some Party machine.

A few University seats, where scholarship enjoys a special franchise, had, however, commenced to return at first one, and then more, independent Members. With the break-up of the Liberal fractions, further Members have declared themselves to be 'independent', and such men actually stand a better chance of re-election under that title than if they called themselves 'Liberal'. The longer the present one-Party-rule continues and election contests between Coalitionists are prevented, the better opportunities will arise for the election of independents.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, once elected, most 'independents' hasten to get under that Party 'umbrella' which will most effectively ensure their re-election. The perpetual preoccupation of every Member of Parliament is the retention of his seat in Parliament. I pretended to myself that I joined the Labour Party in 1919 in order to teach a more responsive crowd, both inside and outside the House, the immortal doctrines of Henry George; but I was always secretly aware that I wanted also to save my seat in the collapse of the Liberal Party.

#### THE I.L.P. AND PARTY RULES

I joined through the medium of the Independent Labour Party which was then an independent section of the Labour Party. That section could then nominate candidates for Parliament in precisely the same way as can still the Fabian Society of constructive socialists, and the Social Democratic Party of old-fashioned doctrinaires. Both these I disliked, as being anti-Liberal and essentially Conservative. For some years I was chairman of the

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written six more seats have been won by independents from the established Parties!

then large group of the I.L.P. in the House. Gradually, from 1923 onwards, the disciplinary Rules for the Labour Party in Parliament and in the various local Councils were invented and enforced in order to shackle or keep out the I.L.P. Members.

The war between the I.L.P. and the Trade Union section of the Labour Party was not of my doing; rather was it the result of the ambition of Mr. Wheatley, the Irish Catholic leader of the Party in Glasgow, who, with Maxton, entered Parliament in 1922. Wheatley saw that his best road to power was to inconvenience the Party. This he did by forcing divisions in the House on extreme issues, in order to pillory his own colleagues in the Party as mere lukewarm 'gas and water' socialists. Within a year, Mr. MacDonald put him in his first Cabinet, actuated rather by fear than by love. But the same tactics were continued when we reverted to opposition in 1924.

The Party Rules were drafted to make impossible the inconvenient divisions in the House forced by this minority of extremists. Wheatley being dead, Maxton and the I.L.P. rump were expelled, and, to make the expulsion final, no man could ever again be adopted as a Labour candidate for Parliament until he had signed a document to say that he would obey the Party Rules in the House of Commons. This I declined to do; but the I.L.P., directly they were outside the Labour Party and had become a Glasgow family Party of five M.P.s, immediately adopted similar rigid Rules of discipline.

For many years, therefore, I have been an unaccepted but acceptable Member of the Labour Party in the House. I got the weekly whip as a convenience, if not as a right. My independence was tolerated as a tribute to the broadminded spirit of the Party; perhaps the Party leaders may now wish that they had treated Sir Stafford Cripps with the same liberality. Ever since 1929, expulsions and readmissions have constituted the undignified history of a Party which lives at present in greater fear of Communism than of Fascism.

• This same struggle within the Party has been going on in every town council. Everywhere majority discipline hunts heretics. The I.L.P. have vanished except from Westminster and Glasgow, where they remain ignominiously in the pocket of the Catholic Church. But independents thrive wherever discipline is attempted, and Party leaders find rigid rules more embarrassing and absurd on the Stoke City Council than do similar leaders at Westminster. I do not believe that rigid Party discipline can have an important future in England. Even Communism may adopt here something of our ineradicable toleration and Non-conformity; it is already a powerful critical agency.

By the end of the war (and the Party truce) no Party machine will have funds or efficient machinery. Moreover, there is sure to be a Communist Party to cut into the Labour vote, rendering Labour nomination less essential to securing a seat on the Left in Parliament. Any Liberal organization and candidate will find it wiser to adopt the style and title of 'independent', as did Vernon Bartlett with such success at Bridgwater. In the circumstances prevailing at the end of the war, one may hope that both Conservative and Labour organizations may find rebellion in their ranks and that many independent candidates may be supported just because they are against the caucus and adherents of no pledge-bound Party. The Communists will be stigmatized as pledge-bound and 'noddies' by their Labour opponents, inevitably loosening Labour's own bonds of discipline.

Already the apotheosis of the rebel Sir Stafford Cripps and the conversion of Bevin and Morrison from poacher to game-keeper have sensibly modified vision, faith and hero-worship in the ranks of Labour. In the Tory ranks a similar apotheosis of a greater rebel may work a like illumination. Fascism can hardly become popular here under its own name, but may assist in the downfall of Party, and the resurrection of that independence which was in the past the glory of the House of Commons.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### EDUCATION IN DEMOCRACY

*"You, who wish to remain free, learn obedience to reason and the government of yourselves ; and finally bid adieu to your dissensions, your jealousies, your superstitions, your outrages, your rapine and your lusts."*

JOHN MILTON, 1654.

THE dangers to democracy are obvious enough. Our main hope must be the gradual education of electors. That depends by no means on State education alone ; but on the Press, on parents, on the Church, on writers (especially of fiction), on the cinema, and on Members of Parliament of both Houses.

I was born of engineering stock in the age of mechanical invention. I am still a member of the Institute of Naval Architects, that all-embracing profession. When I was young, steam was still in its infancy, with the compound engine and the turbine and oil-firing still to come ; electricity unknown ; wireless and the radio undreamt of ; the internal-combustion engine, with its offspring of flying machines and caterpillars, was not yet within the imagination of Mr. H. G. Wells. All these inventions and many more have swept over us. Yet, at the end, I say to myself, how have we really benefited ? Perhaps men use the sea more safely in time of peace by reason of the wireless ; perhaps life is easier—too easy—and labour less exhausting ; general knowledge should certainly be greater. Reflection leads me to the queer conclusion that of all inventions of my age the three of real utility have been—bicycles, Boy Scouts and the cinema, and these because they are valuable as aids to education. All are of great service—playing their different roles in the fit and proper education of the people.

#### MANY INVENTIONS

Bicycles encourage individual enterprise and self-reliance. Boy Scouts teach self-discipline, courage and unselfishness. Cinemas give vision and imagination. All help to convert dumb, dull, stupid, resentful cattle into men fit for self-government and able to use democracy. Bicycles are not primarily a means of locomotion ; they are the riders' triumph over nature, every yard impossibly upright, as one moves forward with giant stride. They are a miraculous escape to dreams in which one never touches ground, but ever puts foot down ten times further forward than mortal man has a right to do on earth. The machine moves with the body, goes as directed,

rests as desired, depends on the rider alone, and offers adventure round every corner. On horseback one is not so fancy-free, so much the master of one's fate. The bicycle has done more to open the door of the world to all the young of Britain than was ever possible in previous ages. Adventure and courtship—the salt of life—become both true and idealized.

As for Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, I hope they are still doing their daily good deed. There, too, imagination has its fling as never before for the working class. The discipline and adventure of camping out, the common work and comradeship, did as much to change the youth of Britain as did Hitler's training in brutality and violence to change the youth of Germany. I doubt whether courage was even considered suitable for the education of working-class children before the Boy Scouts took them out to desert islands with *Masterman Ready* and to the camping grounds and the warpath with Fenimore Cooper. We may be permitted to prefer his Red Indians to the Japanese, and altruism to atrocities.

It is usual to blame the cinema for crime waves, for youthful depravity, for absenteeism, and for deeds of darkness. This silly nonsense comes from unsuccessful competitors for the people's cash and attention. The cinema provides education just exactly as does book-reading. Is it all fiction? Merely palatable to those who do not read, but better than no reading at all? By no means! Educational films are still in their infancy, but aesthetically, and in the widest sense of education, modern films are valuable beyond the range of any books. The historical films may be inaccurate in the eyes of historians, but so was much of Miss Young's *Stories from History*, which nevertheless opened history to all of my generation.

Or consider the numbers so educated, especially in comparison with those who receive adult education, either organized or in the theatre. One of the most thought-producing plays of our time is Shaw's *Major Barbara*, with its indeterminate struggle between authority and liberty, between efficiency and idealism. I doubt whether more than 25,000 have seen the play, whether more than 50,000 have read it. Two millions must have seen the film; and, in my opinion, the film is as superior to the acted play as is acting to mere reading. When *St. Joan* is added to *Pygmalion* and *Major Barbara*, even more valuable stuff for thought will be taught nightly to 10,000 people. Why more valuable? Because Shaw, in *Major Barbara*, as filmed, inclines to the side of authority and efficiency; whereas *St. Joan* shows a terrible understanding of the cruelty and mental processes in Church and State which governed the mind of man in the childhood of the 15th century, before the dawn of liberty.

But even normal fiction, however potted and compressed for the film, plays its part and reaches a larger public. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had for its day a reading public surpassing all save the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*. No one reads it today; but, as a film, it has nearly as large an audience as it had readers a century ago. Tolstoi's *Resurrection* has been opened to ten times the number that ever read it. So has Mark Twain's *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*. The moral educational value of such films exceeds imagination, for the picture stays long after the written word has faded from the minds of those unaccustomed to carry words from eye to brain. I am convinced that the documentary and strictly educational speaking films are destined to revolutionise all education, from the nursery to the university degree—though it may meet opposition from some members of the teaching profession. Only the answering of questions will be left to teachers, and for

that we need a 'brains trust', composed of supermen who like answering questions. All audiences prefer the 'heckling' time, and the very word (from Scotland) means pulling out the fur, and a rough time for speakers and teachers. Lord Lang, when Archbishop of Canterbury, put the ideal of future education into a perfect phrase: "The true test of the success of teaching is *not* whether children are able to answer questions set by others, but whether they are eager to ask questions set by themselves."

#### PUBLIC-SCHOOL EDUCATION

I translated the Archbishop's dictum into a shorter phrase, which I believe to be the essence of true education: 'Teach them to think, not *what* to think.'

The education of our governing class in England has long been in the hands of our great Public Schools. Much of the snobbery and conceit which derived from Eton and Harrow and Winchester and Rugby must be deplored by the philosophers of democracy. But these Public Schools did teach that it was shameful to lie, to be dishonest in thought or act, to shirk, or sneak, or 'suck-up', or 'pass the buck'; that it was the part of a man to take without flinching what was coming to him. They tried to teach that it was better to be dead than to be a slave, that only cowards submit to injustice whether to themselves or to others, that protest and resentment are virtues. I suppose they taught courage of a sort, some self-respect, and that team spirit which does not so much mean beating the other side as helping the other fellow. Above all, they taught us to think, not *what* to think.

There is no British Tory so old and crusted that he does not acclaim such education and hold it well fitted for the master class of a master race. But we are no longer governed by a master class. Democracy no longer consists of a Parliament of one class, well trained for governing. When Robert Lowe, feeling full of dread at the passage of the Second Reform Bill (1867) said, "Now let us at least educate our masters", he showed considerable wisdom. The three Rs are not enough. If democracy is to survive, the people must be taught to think as well as to read and write.

Is all that perfect education described above to be confined to the master class of a master race? When will our old and crusted Tory believe that such education can properly be given to the working class of a master race, or even to other races not yet trained in mastery? Only then will democracy be safe.

Of course such teaching can never be countenanced by Nazis, Fascists and Papists. 'Teach them *what* to think' is the essence of all authoritarian direction and rule. It is salvation by faith and not by works. It is government by emotion and not by reason. That is why dictators specialize on their Youth Movements, and suppress all rival merchants of 'what to think'. That is why the Roman Church cannot be content with certain hours for teaching their religion in a State school; they must have complete control of the whole education of 'their' children in 'their' schools. Over all that, there can be no sort of argument: 'They', the Germans and Italians and Irish, must *not* be taught to think.

But is it safe and prudent to teach our English 'lower orders' to think, —not what to think?—to give them that education which we all believe to be the one best fitted for the master class of a master race?

Much depends upon the answer. All enemies of democracy will answer



'No !' How shall we answer ? How will Stalin answer ? It is common ground to Democrats, Fascists and Communists that the building of character should be the aim of education. Bishops and sociologists have learnt the cliché :

*Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,  
Sich ein Karakter in dem Strom der Welt,*<sup>1</sup> . . . as

said Goethe. Every prize-giving speaker echoes the theme. But all define character to suit themselves. To the Fascist a good character implies obedience without argument, stoicism and endurance, a mind disciplined in simple hero-worship of the master.

To our Church, character means honesty and truthfulness, power to resist temptation, unselfishness and the dignity of self-support. Such was the ideal English gentleman, the product of centuries of the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*. The democrat sees character in the man who thinks for himself, respects himself and can take the unpopular side.

Once, when I was at Gyor, in Bolshevik Hungary, I got talking to a man—or he got talking to me. My companions sheered off, nervous of my company, for the man was a propaganda agent, a job which has other less attractive titles. He asked me how I liked the country. I said, "Fine, but it is all so peaceful. You might drop the dictatorship business." He said, "Impossible ! We could not maintain order without it." It seemed to me the order of dumb animals, so I said, "I prefer rebels to cabbages"; being a man of labels and erudition, he replied, "I see you are a follower of Bakounin. I believe in Karl Marx." I rather hope Stalin believes in himself. These *post-mortem* loyalties are so cramping.

#### STATE EDUCATION

State education—judged by any standards—has improved in my time. The schools set an example to most homes of cleanliness and freshness. The children enjoy more outdoor life. The subjects are made interesting. The teachers, especially the women teachers, are well bred and well educated. Perhaps I speak mainly of the provided schools in my own county, where parents take a pride in their children's progress and behaviour. For the tales one hears of children evacuated from the slums of London, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow show lower standards of life and conduct, at least among the Irish Catholic element of the population.

Girls are particularly sensitive to example and rapidly acquire in secondary school the manners, mind and accents of their mistresses. Eliza Doolittle was not more responsive to her professor's tuition than are the girls promoted from elementary schools. By the time they are 16 they have ceased to giggle and whisper in corners ; by the time they go to college they have ceased to be afraid of the sound of their own voices and are indistinguishable from those who come from cultured homes. Unfortunately boys are not so adaptable, and as they go alone up the ladder feel acutely the difference, and acquire an inferiority discomfort. This, however, has never been the case in Scotland, and the extermination of such snobbish fear among English boys may well be anticipated as one result of this war. Of course, if all classes were educated together, as is generally the case in America, class differences would die out much more quickly, to the great comfort of all and with the best results to self-respect.

<sup>1</sup> Genius may develop in the cloister, but character only in the struggle of life.

## UTILITY EDUCATION

Apart from that vicious habit of working for examinations which saps the daring of the teachers, and promotes despair among the dull, I see little to complain of in the usual curriculum of the State schools. I would have more learning by heart, more play-acting, more teaching by films, more history (especially American); more learning to speak and debate; less spelling, grammar, dictation; less questioning by the teacher, and more asking of questions from the desks. It is good for all boys to have a bit of constructive carpentering to do; so it is for girls to explore the adventurous side of cooking. All that is good education. What I fear, resent and despise is vocational training, which does not widen the mind, but seals the brain before it can develop.

The worst form of vocational training is, no doubt, boys marching in step, singing the Horst Wessel song, and carrying dummy rifles. That it has been effective in closing the mind and opening again the beast that preceded the mind none can now doubt. But long before Baldur von Schirach, Germany inculcated the material advantages (to the masters) of the vocational training of youth. It was begun by Dr. Kirschensteiner 40 years ago. H. G. Wells, in *The First Men in the Moon*, pointed out whither it led.<sup>1</sup> While the boy is still young it is decided what he is to be. Henceforth all his 'education' centres round his trade or profession. The prospective chimney-sweep becomes 'chimney conscious'. He learns the chemistry of soot, his sums treat of pounds of soot; his freehand drawing concerns chimney-stacks, but storks and any such distractions are unnaturally excluded from *his* business in life. The draper's assistant learns the folding of huckaback and that the customer is always right; he sees no alternative to "crawling up a drainpipe all his life".<sup>2</sup> He likes it and knows no better. This is materialism run mad; but it appears as wisdom to some of our educational experts, seeking something new, searching for efficiency, and satisfied with results in Germany. Being myself an expert in freedom, I rightly deride the experts in *fascismo*.

*Non ragioniam' di lor', ma guarda e passa.*<sup>3</sup>

## THE MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION

Let us pass from the advantages which accrue to democracy from teaching the young to think, to the directing authority which has power to inculcate such teaching and secure such advantages. If we leave out of account the Roman Catholic schools, all others are in practice directed and managed by the County or Borough Education Authority. Directors of Education, servants of some two hundred Councils, are responsible to their Council for schools, teachers and what is taught. The Directors co-operate with H.M. Inspectors on the one hand and the Chairmen of the Education Committees on the other. The Education Committee is selected from the Council, with educational enthusiasts added by co-option. In this oligarchy, the Chairman usually gets his own way, the Director squares conscience with diplomacy and H.M. Inspector receives inadequate support from the Board of Educa-

<sup>1</sup> They found the inhabitants of the moon all specialists. Some all brain; others all deft fingers; others of immense muscularity; all exceedingly efficient machines for the use of . . . somebody else.

<sup>2</sup> *Kippis*, by H. G. Wells.

<sup>3</sup> "Do not discuss such people, but look down the nose and pass by."—*Dante*.

tion in his well-meant efforts to get the ratepayers' money spent on better schools.

County Councils are generally Conservative in politics, so therefore is the direction of the education oligarchy. Questions concerning education do not come before the electors for discussion, the parents take little interest, and the whole subject becomes marooned, stranded on an island inhabited only by experts and teachers. The falling birthrate has seriously perturbed the teachers' Trade Union, which feels that their profession is threatened. To make up for the loss of children under 14, they urge the extension of compulsory education from 14 to 16.

This slight obscurity as to whether children exist for the benefit of the teaching profession or *vice versa* is due to the segregation of the subject, and the lack of public interest such as used to be aroused by the direct elections to the old school boards, abolished in 1902. That step was taken by the Conservative Government to end the political struggle between the Church of England and the then powerful Non-conformist bodies. These are no longer powerful, and we might with great advantage, both to democracy and to education, revert to the direct election of school boards. That would restore the interest of parents, and secure for education and criticism the public (unpaid) services of those who value education for altruistic reasons.

#### MUST EDUCATION BE COMPULSORY ?

The one whose opinion I value most urges me to leave out this following section. He says, quite rightly, that 'if you tilt at windmills, people will think it is only windmills you tilt at'. But at 70 one may as well remain honest, trust in reason, and state the argument. I believe that compulsory education will, as public opinion improves, become unnecessary.

Of course it comes as a shock to experts and politicians to be told that compulsory education is unnecessary. Even readers whom I have so far carried with me gasp at such heresy—it is contrary to all that has been proclaimed for seventy years. Yet the theory that 'working-class' parents need compulsion in order to make them do the decent thing by their children, whereas 'upper class' parents do not, seems to me to be sheer impertinence. So long as wages were on the hunger line and children were permitted to work in mines, fields and factories at 10 years of age, poverty constrained parents to push their children into the industrial machine. Those conditions no longer prevail. Even if children were allowed to work under 14 years of age, most parents would still send their children to school—as they used to do in Scotland, though they had to pay for the schooling.

There is no great gulf between the minds, pride and affections of 'upper' and 'lower' class where children are concerned. The 'upper' send their boys to boarding-schools when they become a nuisance in the home; the 'lower' feel a similar urge to 'be shut of' their boys seven hours a day. Mrs. de Vere Robinson sends her children to a boarding-school she cannot afford because Mrs. Talbot Smythe does the same. So would Mrs. Jones see that her boy was 'learn'd' because Mrs. Smith down the lane was giving her boy a decent chance. Mrs. de Vere Robinson is making a sacrifice and is all the better for it, so would Mrs. Jones be. Their children would later appreciate the sacrifice, love their parents more, and make better use of their chance of education.

If some little mother had to stay at home and mind her baby brothers

and sisters or get her widowed father's tea, need one suppose that the consciousness of being useful and needed is not in itself an education of high value? Freedom to choose is an education in right choice. Visits from the School Attendance Officer, armed with the power to inflict punishment on the defaulting parent, arouse just indignation or produce a slave mentality. They bring the law into contempt in the eyes of a naturally rebellious people. It were far better to rely upon the persuasive powers of emulation and public opinion.

If education were not compulsory—if no particular school could claim its quota of scholars—would not education become more attractive, even better? Headmasters would be judged by the number or type of child attracted. Their lectures would bring results; their popularity and social work would bring its manifest reward. The school would acquire a name, something better than percentages in an examination paper, or percentages of attendance. "I was at Hassall Street under Thompson" would take its place beside "I was at Harrow under Bowen", or "I was at Clifton under Percival".

A little healthy competition must surely do schools good, do scholars good, and provide a more exciting career for teachers. Had I power I would try to assimilate the school-teacher to the panel doctor. He should be doctor of the mind, watching the child from start to finish, ever stimulating and recommending, special classes, reading, occupation and employment.

Whatever politicians may say, or school-teachers desire, neither children nor parents will ever allow education to become *compulsory* up to 16, for both children and parents will combine to break any such law. With the alternative of becoming a man, doing what men are doing, for good pay, boys will make themselves intolerable in school. Read in Jack Lawson's *A Man's Life* his joy at starting work in the pit, helping his family, following in his father's footsteps, being treated as grown-up and responsible. Make education available for those who want it; then that education will be such as to attract; make it compulsory, and it will be uninspired and evaded.

#### THE PRESS

So much for the effect of State schools on the education of democrats. In so far as the State schools teach the young to think for themselves, that teaching is the salvation of democracy. In so far as they teach the young *what* to think, and inject into their minds and hands the State's idea of 'the perfect citizen', that teaching leads to Fascism—to the men in the moon and the men dressed in blue of Mr. Wells' romances.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that all schools should teach 'Civics', the knowledge of how we are governed and the responsibilities of citizenship. Personally I think 14 is early enough to begin such learning, probably early enough to begin reading the newspapers. But for the salvation of democracy, it is necessary that by the time the child leaves school at 14 he should be able and anxious to start reading newspapers. With or without knowledge of Civics, he must begin to understand the world. Such understanding is given by an honest Press.

It is unfortunately sometimes the case that the worst newspapers have the largest circulation. But even the worst in a democratic country provides a better education than the best under a tyranny. Every day ten million people in Great Britain read a newspaper. From this daily perusal they get

<sup>1</sup>*The First Men in the Moon, and When the Sleeper Wakes.*

so much more information and food for thought than State schools provide, that one is tempted to an aphorism. Schools need only to open the newspaper to open the mind.

Neither in Great Britain nor in the United States has the Press now much political success. Already, as it seems to me, democracy has advanced to the stage of reading and at the same time thinking critically about what they read. Neither presidential elections in the United States nor general elections in this country are any longer decided by the newspapers. The Press supplies information ; it does not indoctrinate. Throughout 1938 and 1939, down to the very moment of his fall in May 1940, the British Press was overwhelmingly pro-Chamberlain, while the country became ever more critical. The country became critical because, while absorbing all the information supplied, readers knew enough to form their own judgment. It was not a triumph of democracy over the Press. It was the triumph of the Press that it had taught democracy to be critical. There is not the slightest evidence that the radio has ousted the Press. Our B.B.C. was (and is) more conservative than the average conservative newspaper. It supported Mr. Chamberlain as efficiently as did *The Times* itself, and it claims 2,000,000 listeners. The great broadcasters of America follow the American Press rather than lead it ; and Father Coughlin, as a Fascist mouthpiece, has left so little mark on public opinion, that one must discount the alleged power of emotion over reason in the modern America.

No doubt in lands where political feeling runs high, as, for instance, in France in the years 1936-1939, a Press unmuzzled, even by any law of libel, can impart a personal and social bitterness far beyond our understanding. In France they did supplant reason by fear. They did indoctrinate. They catered for a Party, and cared for no readers outside the Party. Nearly all our newspapers wish to attract readers from all Parties, and practise moderation even in the presentation of facts. If all nations have the Press that they deserve, it is at least as true that the Press produces the nation it deserves. The English-speaking world could do without its schools better than without its newspapers. Indeed, I concur with Thomas Jefferson :

"The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right ; and, were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

#### THE PARENTS

The father or mother of independent mind almost inevitably influences children in the same direction. Consciousness of politics awoke in the middle classes in the 17th century, and the influence of the struggle between Crown and Parliament, between Church and Dissent, has passed on through every succeeding generation. The Chartist agitation, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, and the early Trade Union struggle, affect equally today the working class. How often have I heard "My grandfather was a Chartist" given as reason for support of the Liberal and now of the Labour side ! At every general election children learn to what Party their parents belong and wear the colours of that Party. The parents are committed ; they could not easily explain a subsequent change of colour, so that to shift them is difficult. Generally speaking, every child was born and remains a little Liberal or a

little Conservative. Now the Labour Party has inherited from the Liberals ; but the larger families of the Catholics have increased also the number of little Conservatives. While Liberal and Labour are both pledged vaguely to democracy, parents find it difficult to explain its virtues to their children. It is much easier to explain benevolent socialism, which has more in common with Christian communism than with the 'good old cause'. If education in democracy were left to parents without guidance it would indeed fare badly.

Even highly educated parents shun the task of explaining their politics to their offspring. They feel it safer to feed them with facts.

#### CHURCH AND CHAPEL

Church or Chapel influence has been the most powerful force behind the two Parties. Church to the Right ; Chapel to the Left. The cleavage was clear-cut down to the election of 1906 and raged over the Education Act of 1902. Mr. Gladstone, a High-Churchman, was regarded almost as a traitor to his Church even before the Home Rule Bill. A Liberal parson was so rare as to be suspected of turpitude. A Non-conformist parson who was Conservative was shunned by his flock. Quite half our present Labour leaders were brought to politics in the chapel, often as local preachers. Even today the Labour hymn-book is indistinguishable from the chapel hymn-book. They literally sang themselves into politics :

"Be faithful to death, to your freedom and laws" ! or

"When wilt thou save Thy people, Lord" !

Democracy meant John Bright, whose aura mingled with John Brown's body. It meant Dr. Clifford. It meant puritanism, temperance, and the Kingdom of the Saints.

But all that passed away as social questions and socialism became pre-eminent. A vertical cleavage became a horizontal cleavage. The Non-conformist divines forsook the political platform. The most active parsons took their place, standing on socialist planks and tubs. Year after year of Conservative Government dried up conservative propaganda and left politics dead in 'respectable circles'. Like the Church of Rome, our Church and Chapel, too, shunned Party and eschewed politics ; not of course that they did not vote—only they no longer voted against each other. The new cleavage left democracy without expounders. Only since Hitler overran Europe have they all hurried back to explain the vices of tyranny and Fascism. They are still too hazy as to the distinction between Democracy, Social Democracy, and National Socialism to be of much educational value. But they have found an agreeable point of difference from the Roman Catholic Church. Once more they feel they ought to have views on politics, to reprobate Fascism, and to maintain our morale, if not our Constitution. Unfortunately they have come out of a dark room, and are still blinking in the sunshine.

#### WRITERS FOR FREEDOM

More educational are the prose-writers. The Left Book Club and the Ministry of Information (from the conservative Right) have produced the true cautionary tale of Europe and the fall of democracy. American and British writers have taken on the defence of democracy with insistent zeal and marked success. For nine years Gollancz, the Penguins and Hutchinson's

have held the flag aloft, broken isolation and appeasement, and created the new altruism of the Atlantic Charter. They have crowned with an aureole the survivors of that International Brigade which it was once a crime to join or to assist. They have made Russia and Britain mutually affectionate. Almost they have eliminated Colonel Blimp and embraced Mahatma Gandhi.

All this they have done, but it has been emergency action to save the world from Hitler, the work mostly of unexpected<sup>1</sup> Left-Wing rebels who had no great enthusiasm for parliamentary democracy. They have taught us what to hate; but remain hazy concerning the shape, size and composition of their new world. All—save that old war-horse Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia—all, from Priestley to Norman Angel, would murmur 'liberalism is not enough'. That, however, teaches no one how to prevent corruption, Party violence or administrative inefficiency from destroying democracy and substituting Fascism, even after the war is won.

#### PARLIAMENT AND STATE PROPAGANDA

Members of Parliament, by precept and example, would seem to be the fit and proper persons to educate the electorate on the virtues of Parliament and vices of Fascism. Even with the Party truce, they still have many opportunities to speak; but the theme is always the obvious crimes of the enemy, rarely the praise of our own parliamentary form of Government. Our democracy is not for export, nor even for the shop-window. So the people wait, with ear to the ground, knowing little of what is at stake. They can understand what it would be like to have one's throat cut, but not the implications of blackshirt rule by Mosley's thugs, still less the possibilities of freedom from fear.

In normal times the Member of Parliament is the natural source of education in every branch of democracy. But even in normal times he had to be coached for the part, by his leaders, by pamphlets, leaflets and books. We have indeed to consider how best schools, cinema, B.B.C., Press literature, Church and Parliament, can be supplied with the most effective ideas on the virtues of our form of democracy and the dangers to be avoided. That is the object of my *Memoirs of a Fighting Life*, of my anthology *Forever Freedom* and of this book.

Propaganda has been my business for forty years. I have agitated for Single Tax, for native African rights, for Indian freedom, for Zionism, for Union Now—ever with enthusiastic societies to shower leaflets and provide arguments, but with little success. Whence I judge that success can only result from propaganda on the widest national scale, and that mass psychology requires emotion even more than argument. In politics the strongest emotion is not love, nor fear, but indignation; the widest scale is no longer national, but covers all the fighting United Powers.

Consider examples of successful propaganda. Emancipation in America was achieved by indignation through the appeal to the emotions of Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Socialism, an appeal to the emotion of indignation, was popularized here through books written by William

<sup>1</sup> Whoever expected Frank Owen, Michael Foot, Allan Nevins, Ed. Morrow, Vernon Bartlett, G. T. Garratt, Quentin Reynolds, A. J. Cummings, or Bill Shirer? David Low we knew of old.



Morris or Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, not through the reasoning of Karl Marx. Nazism, an appeal to indignation against Versailles, Jews, 'profiteers', and aliens, rose to power through *Mein Kampf*. Or now, the superb morale of the Soviet has been attained by indignation at German atrocities, and also by a new emotion of love of comrades. Both indignation and solidarity are stimulated of set purpose by the Government of the U.S.S.R. This is national propaganda on an immense scale. On the other hand our propaganda from the B.B.C. or the Ministry of Information still relies mainly on appeals to reason—sometimes rather insincere reasons—lacks national drive and is addressed abroad, not to the Home front. Indeed, it is dictated by the Foreign Office to foreigners.

I have no idea what is the national propaganda, if any, carried on by Washington or by China. But I am quite sure that a united command is required as much at the microphone as in the field. At present Soviet voices and our own, as heard on the Continent, are often in opposition to one another. To listen to some of the 'messages' put out by us to Austria, Italy, Spain and Portugal, one would suppose Broadcasting House to be a sub-office of the Vatican rather than of the Foreign Office.

The Soviet sees the best chance of victory in the revolt of the slave peoples of Europe. So do all thinking people in this country. The Soviet shape and direct their daily propaganda—*Soviet War News*—to a double end, to sustain the morale of the Home front and to destroy that of the enemy. We have nothing corresponding to *Soviet War News*. We do nothing for morale on the home front—not even circulating *Soviet War News* in the factories or to the troops—and broadcasts to the Continent and to the Near East seem directed to proving how close is our affection and how innocent our intentions. Possibly our Foreign Office hope for a revolution in Europe from the Right, in which case they will be disappointed and our money wasted. More probably, the surviving anti-Russian appeasers wish to counter the Soviet propaganda, because they fear the Soviet and revere Rome. That is hardly loyal to the United Nations, or to the Prime Minister.

There is no need to have propaganda identical with that of the Soviet Union. In fact that might be impossible, since we have not the same material to work on. But if freedom and democracy are what we fight for—not the preservation of 'pals' in Italy, Greece, Egypt, Hungary, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, France and the Balkans—then we should consider and use propaganda for democracy. We need not even invent. It is ready to hand. There is nothing we need be ashamed of, or conceal from Franco or Salazar. It is just our history and traditions; if anybody is ashamed of our history or traditions or character, then he had better not have a hand in propaganda. He is not needed, for without faith propaganda rings false and convinces no man.

These shadow-boxers are men of the same kidney as the debunkers of our history—the glorifiers of the Stuarts, the vilifiers of the Whigs. Propaganda had better start by telling our story straight, with all its warts but with all its glories too. See to it<sup>1</sup> that those who go about to break Parliament, Parliament shall break them. I do not accuse these men of being Fascist. I do charge them with being ashamed of our past, of our ever-successful fight for freedom. We urgently need education in democracy.

<sup>1</sup> "Let the Consuls see to it that the Republic comes to no harm." The formula used in ancient Rome when appointing a dictator.

For that, propaganda is essential, and that propaganda must be based on selected history. Whether such propaganda takes the form of novels, plays, broadcasts, sermons, lectures or leaflets, let it be drawn up loyally by those who hold the faith.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

## RECONSTRUCTION OF ENGLAND

*"We propose to abolish poverty by setting at work that vast army of men, only anxious to create wealth, but who are now, by a system which permits dogs-in-the-manger to monopolize God's bounty, deprived of the opportunity to toil."*

HENRY GEORGE, 1887.

It is at the end of the war that the testing-time will come—for democracy, for Parliament, and for statesmen. No man can foretell the end. Writing, however, in July 1942, it would appear that the end must be revolution in Germany and Japan. Then indeed reconstruction will become possible. Yet the reconstructed civilization may be very different from that we know.

## CONTROLS AFTER THE WAR

*The Outlook for Homo Sapiens*<sup>1</sup> is too dismal. Mr. H. G. Wells has deceived me before. *The War in the Air* made immediate financial collapse seem obvious and unavoidable in 1914—that was before the first pin-prick of modern war. *The Outlook* was written in anticipation of the second smash. Again society has rallied to defy anarchy, and defeat Mr. Wells—even to defeat me.

I saw the war ending about 1949—in victory, of course—but with the population of the world reduced to half, and that half fighting for roots and berries—towns raiding country, and civil war between 'vigilantes' and 'brigands'. That may still be the end in Europe and the Americas; but not, I think, here. The Government has again fooled the prophets.

Out of politeness one says 'The Government' has fooled the prophets. I do not believe they knew what they were doing when they 'pegged' the exchange in the last war—certainly they did not when they unpegged it, or when by deflation they enabled the 'pound to look the dollar in the face', or when they 'went off gold'. It was just a hand-to-mouth affair when, this time, they pegged the pound at \$4. It just seemed the sensible thing to do at the moment; then all the other things followed by natural sequence. No pounds must leave for America—nor presently for anywhere else. No investments must be made abroad; sell all such at the pegged price. No imports save under licence. Less labour allowed for exports, still less for making luxuries for the home market. Conscription of man-power and allocation of labour to munitions and essentials. All necessities supplied by Government below cost. All non-necessaries made more expensive by sales tax and restricted production.

We have not got there yet, but we are getting on! The people accept it, partly because there is no other way of holding out, and hold out we must,

<sup>1</sup>*The Outlook for Homo Sapiens*, H. G. Wells.

partly because they rather enjoy the joke. What is the use of being rich if you can't buy anything beyond absolute necessities, and then not more than anybody else? Everybody is saving on a magnificent scale,<sup>1</sup> and everybody likes saving. It gives one such a feeling of security as well as the glow of self-sacrifice.

I used to have some compunction when urging people to put their savings into Government loans at 3 per cent (of which they get only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent), because I thought of inflation after the war when the £ was unpegged. Now I have less hesitation. I do not believe the £ ever will be unpegged, that inflation will run loose, that we shall ever go back to 1939, or 1931, or 1919. Imports will remain controlled because the £ must be pegged, and Government must continue to give us food and clothing at some fancy figure. Man-power must still be directed by the State to make necessities and constantly to accumulate that capital, which is wealth reserved for the creation of more wealth. Government will continue to take our income back from us in taxes on sales and cigarettes, if not in Income and Excess Profits Tax.

#### RUSSIA'S FUTURE

We may owe our survival to Russia, to an example set which we may wish to imitate. Such visions of the future are apt to disregard possible changes in Russian outlook as in our own. All the teachings of the history of the bad old world would show us Stalin as the first of a long line of Emperors dominating all Europe and Asia, obeyed as all-powerful, worshipped as divine, and periodically assassinated by Palace Guards. "Think," they would say, "not of Stalin but of Stalin's successors, enviously hating comparison with the Great Man, fearing rivals, jealous of power, with all the wealth of the world at their undisputed disposal. Can such men remain honest?" The answer must be that they can not.

Stalin has organized a great nation, inspired it with superb morale and a courage surpassing all that history can show. He has used brutality, tyranny and police in a fashion that revolts the humane and the libertarian. Yet Alexander, Augustus, Charlemagne can exhibit no result to compare with Joseph Stalin's twenty years. They conquered; he may have forcibly emancipated his people. Perhaps the most singular of all his virtues has been his reluctance to go to war. Was it only that he was building up and waiting for the supreme tests that he knew must come? We shall see when Germany and Japan are at last purged of their desire and capacity for robbery and conquest. What will he do then? If his reluctance to fight is singular among leaders of revolution, his economic emancipation of the Russian peoples has an even more singular merit. He actually seems to have educated his subjects for freedom. Is it possible that he may wish them so educated that they may govern themselves?

Much hangs on the answer to that question—and this one which is cognate thereto: Can he dare to have his subjects taught to think, not what to think? Once he called a Parliament, elected in our manner by direct election from single-Member constituencies. When the war is over we shall know the answer to that question by this evidence—will such Soviet meet regularly and use reason without fear? Unless a responsible Soviet is firmly

<sup>1</sup> Except the unfortunates who have not been able to cut down and are living by selling their capital to the savers!

established before Stalin dies, vested interests will rise to perpetuate autocracy. Then a Russian Empire may flourish, decay and pass into history like all the Empires of the past. The heirs of Stalin will become even as the heirs of Peter the Great ; and the 'Heroes of the Soviet' will revert to the servility of Ivan Ivanovitch.

Material reconstruction after the war will easily take place in Russia ; but the building up of self-government must be difficult, for the very reason that autocracy has so greatly succeeded. Such building depends on the wish to build in the mind of one man.<sup>1</sup> Here in Britain there should be no need to build up self-government, but great need of very difficult material reconstruction. It is to be hoped that Britain and Russia may be so knit together by comradeship in arms and mutual dependence in danger that at the end we may help each other in more than material things.

#### RECONSTRUCTION PLANS AT HOME

It is easy, if almost impertinent, to formulate what I hope Russia may learn from us. What we have to learn from them is how to reconstruct a new world in an old country. I watch, sometimes with indignation, the plans that are being made to reconstruct London, Agriculture, Manufacture, Houses, Roads, Business as Usual ! Always the reconstructors make their blueprints for other men's lives, with eyes turned towards the restoration of what has gone. Ever, as they plan, they are haunted by fear of inflation, unemployment, and the vested interests. They shy off such unpleasant thoughts as a carriage horse from a scarecrow. They are the reconstructors ; they draw plans, sketch visions of a new England where all can be happy, busy and good ; it is somebody else's job to prevent inflation and unemployment and to compensate or deal with those tiresome vested interests of the old world.

They think of 1949 in the terms of 1939. What Priestley dreamt of in 1939 was beautiful and soothing. Such was their ambition too. All the men and women at war were to come back to semi-detached parlour houses, centrally heated, with bathrooms ; and they have all been promised their old jobs !—regardless of whether their old jobs were necessary ones or what new jobs will be needed. They will all have a nice little cash nest-egg ; the wheels will go round more smoothly than in 1919. The school-leaving age is to be raised to 16 at least. Of course food prices will be controlled. Government, like a dear old grandmother, will see to everything, and look after everybody in trouble. It is a beatific picture, but bears little relation to the world as it may be at the end of this war, seared with famine, bombs, pestilence and economic collapse.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I don't agree. Stalin is only the most prominent individual. Marx and Lenin are far more powerful yet. (J.F.P.)

<sup>2</sup> This seems unfair both to Priestley and the planners. No doubt the world that Priestley wants would have been physically easier to produce in 1930 than it will be in 1949. But if the world is worse off after the war than during the war, it can only be folly that makes it so. Here, half the working time of the nation, and half its capital and natural resources, are devoted to defence and destruction. Yet the majority of Britons have so far been fitter and even happier than in the dark years of peace-time unemployment. When they can give 90 per cent of their time, instead of only 50 per cent, to construction, an immense advance in the standard of life is obviously physically possible. How soon it will be psychologically possible is a different matter, for, unfortunately, war does more lasting damage to the survivors' minds than it does to their factories or fields. (J.W.)

## A BUSINESS EXAMPLE

Consider the pottery trade. One half of the workers have gone into munitions of war ; so have some of the factories. Other factories have closed down, for the home market has been cut to a small fraction. Those still working are making good profits in what is really a new line of business, but Government takes all above the 1939 level in Excess Profits Tax<sup>1</sup> and half the rest in Income Tax. Therefore no profits can be put back into the business. If recovery is to take place when peace is restored capital will be required for the whole industry—to reopen the closed shops, to replace machines, to finance and redevelop an export trade. Where is the needed capital to be found? Obviously the industry must be financed by Government. The longer the war goes on, and industry runs unaccustomedly, the larger will be the loan required. If the food subsidies are closed or inflation swings prices upwards the loan will have to be even larger. Call it £5,000,000, the pre-war capital value of the whole industry.

Who is to handle these millions needed to reconstruct the industry? What is to be the State supervision, or security? Ask the Board of Trade?—who will refer the matter to the Minister for Reconstruction, who will refer it to the Ministry of Works and Buildings, and they to the Minister for Transport, then to the Supplies, and then to the Treasury. Meanwhile our chance of foreign trade will die, and our unemployed will multiply, get angry and tear up the blueprints and throw out the blueprinters.

I can imagine what the trade would welcome. A Statutory Corporation of Master Potters and Trade Unions endowed with powers to regulate the trade. Each Master producing on a quota of what he produced pre-war, at prices fixed by the Corporation. The amount of the assistance from the State to be allocated by the Corporation. No new manufacturer to come into the industry; no change in process to be permitted, or change in type of product, without the consent of the Corporation. Such 'concentrations' and closings as may be advisable to be made compulsory, and to be compensated for as in the case of coalmines. I cannot imagine a more certain way of protecting the vested interests, losing the public money, and killing an industry.

Observe how similar is this scheme to our established method of dealing with mines—on which indeed I have based the suggestion. Restrict production, increase prices, square the Trade Unions, and prevent the entry of competing foreign goods. Observe further that all other trades will want the same help, devise similar schemes, and run the same ramp. Railways, steel, cotton, boots—all will clamour for *such* 'reconstruction'.

Notice the economy! An old factory, run at a loss, but enjoying the privilege of producing a quota of 50,000 teapots, is closed down. Another firm buys it, paying, not for the building and machinery, worth, perhaps, £200, but for the 50,000 teapot quota; possibly buying also the right to employ the 'hands' turned off. So anyone can buy the right to produce and the right to employ. All this initial charge goes on to the cost of producing the teapots. But the vested interest of the fellow producer-of-teapots has been 'recognized', paid for. We shall have to buy the right to manufacture teapots, or sewing cotton, or cocoa, or ladies' underwear, just as stockbrokers

<sup>1</sup> Twenty per cent is to be paid back after the war.

buy (and sell) a seat on the London Stock Exchange and the right to deal in stocks and shares.

How do they dare to call such fossilized folly 'free enterprise', 'individual initiative', 'career open to the talents' ! Will Russia and Asia stand still, and tie round their people's necks blackmail for permission to produce goods ? Under such a system we become the Asiatics of the 19th century—pre-war Chinese, cooking roast pork by burning down the house. Are there many factories in this country today which should not be pulled down and rebuilt if we are even to compete with America ? Go to America and see !

#### TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

As staggering a 'shut-eye policy' is proposed for 'reconstructing' town, country and transportation. A generation ago landlords and jerry-builders had made our towns into hideous and insanitary slums. Therefore a benevolent Government introduced in 1909 their first Housing, Town-planning, etc., Bill. It gave to Local Authorities the power to insist on all new buildings being laid out according to a plan drawn up by the Local Authority and approved and certified by the Ministry of Health. Once approved, no building could take place except according to plan—houses so many to the acre ; factories in the industrial section ; shops in the shopping district ; roads running pleasantly crooked ; parks and children's playgrounds in their proper place—everything appeared on these perfect blueprints, and every town produced its plan. That was in 1909 ; we are now in 1942, and not one single plan has yet been put into operation.<sup>1</sup>

Why have no plans yet been put into operation by the Ministry ? Because that Act of Parliament and all its numerous successors took account of the vested interests of the landlords and insisted on bargained compensation for all those interests. If the State says to the owner of land that houses built upon his land must not be more closely packed than thirty to the acre, then the Local Authority need *not* compensate the owner. If the State says, your roads must be laid out curved, you must not sell for shops here, for factories there ; this plot of yours has to be for a school, that for a park, then the Local Authority *must* pay compensation. What compensation no one knows, but it must be agreed to and paid *before* the plan can materialize. The actual lay-out and building may never take place ! But it is the ear-marking of the land for prospective use that has to be paid for before approval. For that reason no plan has been started in 33 years !

Nevertheless, the planning staff of the Ministry of Works and Buildings have now produced a plan for the whole country—an excellent plan, on the probable assumption that the State will pay instead of the Local Authorities. But—pay what and to whom ? Again, as in the industrial plans, we shall have to pay the vested interests for the permit to produce houses, factories, etc. Again the sums to be paid are indeterminate and depend on the need for production and the appetite of those who own the power to permit. Again the unemployed must wait to start production till the permit to produce has been bought and paid for.

<sup>1</sup> Except where there was only one landlord affected, as in the case of Welwyn and Letchworth Garden Cities. They were laid out, and the plan worked to, by the owners or with their approval.

## VALUATION OF LAND

While the Act of 1909 was going through Parliament (and before and since) I pressed for a valuation of all land to be at least a guide to the price of the permit to lay it out well and use it. Then, and still today, the price to be paid is based on the Land Clauses Consolidation Act of 1845! The State as a purchaser or planner is held up to ransom. Without a general valuation that hold-up is inevitable, unless, indeed, you take without compensation, as was done in Russia.

It is now 18 months since the Uthwatt Committee was set up by Lord Reith at the Ministry of Works and Buildings to report on this vexed question of compensation and valuation; naturally they have not been able to report yet. For there is no other way, if you compensate at all, than by having a general valuation of land. I offered to give evidence before them to explain what and how to value. I was told that I could submit a paper, but that they did not wish to cross-examine evidence. Of course I declined to add to their waste-paper basket, and of course they cannot make up their minds on what is essentially a Cabinet question. I asked formally in the House of Lords whether they would take evidence from Russia before submitting their report, and was told that they would take 'all relevant circumstances into consideration'! Probably, however, that Committee has ended with Lord Reith's tenure of office; and that the great National Planning is also still-born. Probably the whole matter has been handed over to the new staff of the new Minister for Reconstruction.

## AGRICULTURE

The plan for the reconstruction of agriculture differs from that for the reconstruction of industries. No large loan is required to start it working again, because it has never ceased to work, and all war-time modifications will remain essential in the hard years of peace. Instead of a loan, guaranteed prices constitute the annual gift of the State to farmers, to be balanced by guaranteed wages to the remaining labourers. There is no suggestion of limitation of production at present, or of a milk quota; for the absence of feeding-stuffs will impose an automatic and devastating limitation.

The whole reconstruction scheme takes, however, no account of inflation. I have little doubt that the prices guaranteed to agriculture will be exceeded, so expensive will be imported food. The farmers and landlords will no doubt agitate against the State buying food abroad and selling it at a loss; at less than the guaranteed price. But in such a contest the starving consumer will probably continue to receive his State aid.

## LANDLORD OR TENANT

The Reconstruction Plan attempts to evade the ever-present conflict between landlord and tenant. Will rents be crystallized? or will they be allowed to increase? The farmer farms the land; the landlord farms the farmer. If inflation comes, rents will rise, and the inflation snowball will roll larger and larger. The burning question, purposely avoided in the 'Plan' is: Will rents be allowed to rise? If they are allowed to rise the old vested interest will sap the prosperity of the industry. If they are not allowed to



rise, the rent becomes a fixed or dead rent, and the farmer becomes landlord, subject to the payment of an ever-diminishing quit rent. When inflation happened in Austria, house rents were prevented from rising, the tenant became owner in all but name, and Vienna laid on the new owner exceedingly heavy rates as equivalent to the old rent. But our farmers pay no rates. So they will acquire valuable property for nothing under similar fixation and similar inflation.

Under any inflation land and equities rise in price, while debts, debentures, mortgages, pensions, preference shares, and quit-rents fall in value. I do not see how to avoid the horns of the dilemma in reconstructing agriculture. Either the State must buy the land and the farm buildings and let to tenant-farmers at rack-rents, or else the farmers' new privilege of producing without payment of economic rent must be taxed, either as in Austria or as in equity. He will not sell food cheaper because he pays no rent. He will get either the market price or the guaranteed price, whichever is the greater.

#### INFLATION AND VALUATION

Therefore, for this Agricultural Reconstruction also valuation of the land is essential. We may choose many solutions—collective farms as in Russia and Palestine, State ownership and tenant farmers as in Madras and Nigeria, peasant ownership as in France, or private landlord and tenant as here before the war. But for each of these solutions to work without grievous injustice owing to inflation a valuation of the land must be made now.

It is even more obviously needed for new roads and airfields. The State is blackmailed by the price extracted to pay for the land on which the road is made and for the aerodrome. Then, when constructed, all adjoining land rises in price, so that the landowner gets both immediate compensation and future unearned riches. A general valuation would reduce the compensation ; and taxation on land values would keep down the increment.

#### THE STATE AS LANDLORD

No doubt this is dull, perhaps unintelligible ; but a word should be said here against the solution so popular with our Socialists—State ownership and tenant-farmers. This solution works all right in connection with the few isolated Small Holdings owned by County Councils and rented by tenant farmers ; it works in spite of the fact that high compensation was paid for the land. It would not work if the tenants were the bulk of the farming electorate and the landlord a Department of State. It would not work for these reasons :

Firstly, because now the County Councils break up the large farms into many holdings and deal with new tenants and new farm buildings. That can be done. The State, on the other hand, would be dealing with existing tenants in existing farms. The County Councils deal with many applicants for each Small Holding and can get the best at a competitive figure. The State would be dealing with a sitting tenant enjoying certain tenant rights. In effect he is the only tenant available, and therefore he can fix his own rent.

Secondly, the County Councils buy farms which come on to the market at agricultural prices. The State would have to buy compulsorily all land now

used for farming most of which now has a prospective value. I doubt if any land can be bought today to yield more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent ; but the State would have to pay at least 3 per cent on a £1000,000,000 loan.

Thirdly, electoral pressure would prevent these rents being raised unless there were frequent general valuations.

#### VALUATION AND TITLE

Whether the Reconstruction Plans deal with industries, with housing, with communications or with agriculture, now that inflation has to be faced we can do nothing without a general land valuation. Such valuation would serve also to give us that registration of title which would make land readily marketable. It cannot be tolerated that the curse of inflation should fall only on the middle classes, and that landlords here should profit from inflation as did the Junkers of Germany.

A general valuation of land is by no means difficult. It is, indeed, easier, as I have found in South Africa, than the valuation of buildings. Difficulties here in England arise not as to land values, but by reason of the number of different interests in any piece of land. Once the value of any piece of land is determined, it is then for the persons interested in that value to decide among themselves as to their respective shares. Land and buildings are valued separately, at their market value, by general valuations in all the British Dominions and in the six New England States. Town and city properties are valued all over the United States. The New England States are 300 years old and larger than Great Britain ; throughout these States valuation is set out and printed for all to see, with name of owner and of tenant, area of the land, value of the land, value of buildings, and amount of tax to be paid. Every township revises and publishes its valuation yearly. The 'townships' include all rural as well as urban land, and each 'township' averages about fifty square miles. The ownership problem solves itself under such record and taxation, because the man who pays the whole tax becomes after a certain lapse of years the absolute owner against all interests who have not paid tax.

#### P.E.P. AND THE LANDED INTERESTS

It is important to see how Political and Economic Planning deals with the agricultural as well as other problems of reconstruction. The State, according to the plan, should buy the land. Then they lay it down<sup>1</sup> that there must be no selling or long-leasing without State consent.

Now, the desire for a long lease is to get for the farmer security of tenure ; so that he may have the satisfaction of his improvements and personal attachment to the particular holding. So strong is this passion for security of tenure that even the self-interested British landlord finds it difficult today to end a tenancy. The State would find it far more difficult, as witness the few cancellations of tenancy of really bad farmers by County Agricultural Committees, even under war urgency. P.E.P.'s 'short leases' cannot fail to become long leases at fixed rents depriving the State of prospective value and of direction.

Yet in Denmark the difficulty is met successfully. Holdings are let by

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<sup>1</sup>*Planning*, No. 180.

the Danish State under perpetual tenure, subject to rent revision based on fixed periodic general valuations of land value. Thus the tenant has security of tenure and the untaxed value of his improvements and goodwill ; while the State gets the whole land value as it varies with population, demand or inflation.

Our Planners give seven admirable arguments in favour of short leases, not one of which could be achieved in any agricultural democracy without frequently renewed general valuations. To which we must add that the whole of their agricultural plan leaves the agricultural labourer a landless servant with an impassable gulf between him and his master. The labourer's hopes of three acres, a cow and freedom, become vain directly the present farm holdings are crystallized in the hands of the present tenants.

Thus the agricultural effort of the Planners of Reconstruction lines up with their effort for manufacturing businesses. They spread out a new blueprint which shall have the outward appearance (and perhaps intention) of making a fair new world ; but which in fact conceals and restores the old. They close the corporations, prevent competition, return to the mediaeval guild system where everyone knew his place and obeyed the rules of the Guild.

I wish I could think that P.E.P. was merely a reincarnation of the old Fabian Society ; that, inadequately equipped, save with enthusiasm, sociologists had merely filled in time. But now it appears to be rather a criminal perversion of old-time Political Economy in the direction of the Corporative State. Their idea of economic planning is that the whole production of the country shall be planned by a central authority. Who is to make the plan ? How is it to be carried out ? What are the ends it must serve ?

In a free economy individual initiative and the higgling of the market carry through production. Totalitarian States, on the other hand, regulate all prices, produce the required raw materials, distribute to each his allotted share, allot to each his market and quota, and supply the requisite labour, credit or transport. They keep everyone in their proper place. An army of bureaucrats, far exceeding any expeditionary force sent to France, would be required to collect statistics for the plan, to register the streams of materials, to tabulate bottlenecks ; and the labour of accountancy would baffle even the Ministry of Supplies under Lord Beaverbrook. The most perfect State-planned economy of production, weighed down by these overheads, must confess free economy to be more economical.

What are the ends it must serve ? Production for use and not for profit ? No ! Every vested interest is preserved and woven into the machine. From each according to his ability ; to each according to his needs ? No ! From each according to what he or his father did before, and no trespassing on other people's jobs by any alien<sup>1</sup> enterprising fellow ? No incentive except public opinion, and no substitute for the Russian morale ? As for 'to each according to his needs', that has never yet been attempted even in Russia. When I see an accepted tabulation and valuation of what individual needs are it will be time to consider the matter.

These Reconstruction Planners are doubtless earnest men. They seek to reconcile incompatibles, to make reconstruction possible without injuring anyone's old privilege of living on someone else. That may be because they have never studied political economy, have never loved freedom, have

<sup>1</sup> Used in the narrow sense of alien to the Corporation.

never known compulsory unemployment or thought how it could be cured.

They even advocate a tax on the increment value of land, to be levied on sale only and not at death, as though they had invented the idea and no one had ever heard of it before! With solemn ignorance of the incidence of taxation they urge that 'income derived from land should be taxed like any other income'. With the landed interest they hold that agricultural land should escape death duties; that local rates should not be levied on land 'as such'. The effect of the price of land on production; or, that idle land means idle men, is completely strange to them—or is it not? Every plan or tax which can bolster up and preserve the vested interests has their support because P.E.P. is not Political Economy, not honest, but the inspired cloak and mask of the Fascist State.

So the Reconstruction Planners try to forget or seek to avoid (1) the vested interests and their vague unmeasured compensation, (2) the probability of inflation after the war, confounding all their plans, (3) the hosts of unemployed discharged from the fighting services and the munition factories.

Probably the war will see a great decline in the population of the globe. Contrary to the accepted ideas of the Malthusians, a decline in the population will not increase opportunities for employment for the survivors. "Men and hawks eat chickens. But the difference between men and hawks is this: the fewer hawks, the more chickens; but the fewer men, the fewer chickens."

#### REVOLUTION

Unemployment is certain and will affect, if not govern, all the Reconstruction Plans. Unemployment and inflation together may well lead to the destruction of democracy by revolution or by Fascism. Either is to be deplored, but lest Socialists should rejoice in the prospect of revolutionary socialism or communism, let me point out that in conservative England it has always been endangered property that has effected our revolutions. It was so in 1642, in 1653, in 1688, and in 1845. Indeed, revolutions from the Left succeed very rarely unless you lose a war and the Army mutinies. Possibly, if we lost the war by invasion and anarchy, the British Army might mutiny. But I really cannot imagine their doing so, even if there were no cigarettes, food or pay. When the French Army was beaten in 1871 and taken prisoner, the National Guards and police shot down the communists, and they preserved order; as the French police, standing alone, did in 1940. Looking at our Home Guard, I contemplate law and order rather than revolution. Nothing will ever persuade me that we might see the young gentlemen from the Police College dancing the Carmagnol. All I can visualize is the starving mob from the towns raiding the countryside for food or persuading Town Councillors and Justices to march in front to requisition what they can find.

No! If unemployment and inflation produce a revolution here, it will be from the Right and spell Fascism. In all fights between *brigands* and *Vigilantes*, the *Vigilantes* win. Fascism may be the salvation of the vested interests, but let us warn 'property' also: that Fascism is not so much tender to owners of property as to the partners in the Party chest. The vested interests are transferred rather than transformed. The first vested interest to vanish under Fascism would be the House of Commons and all that the House mean for the protection of justice, property, and individual rights.

## OR, FREE THE LAND!

Revolutions have few attractions save for those who hope to be on top. The reflective citizen, knowing how few can be on top, will prefer, if possible, to avoid unemployment and inflation. I think it is possible; but I realize, none better, the immense power of the vested interest which must be removed to make it possible. Only such a crisis as peace will bring, with the alternative of anarchy, could persuade a voluntary liquidation.

Unemployment is caused by lack of opportunities to work.

Most 'solutions' of the unemployment problem involve *useless* work, such as digging with spades instead of ploughing, breaking machines so that men can employ hands, protective tariffs so that we may grow bananas under glass in England, or inflation so that we may work for others.

As no one wants work for its own sake, we need for this enquiry consider only how best to give more opportunity for *useful*, productive work.

All useful, productive work consists in the conversion of land and raw materials into the goods we want where we want them.

All such work must *begin* by the application of labour to land.

For instance, the machines we want to assist our production and transportation of goods depend in the first place on application of labour to raw materials; so also do clothes, food, drink, houses, etc. Useful productive work converts ore, coal, and limestone into sewing-machines. It converts agricultural land into ham sandwiches.

If the primary trades—mining, building, agriculture—can get a chance of *starting* productive work, they will then pass on the job of *completing* production to all the other tradesmen to finish and transport and retail the article. The employment snowball starts rolling.

Conversely, if the primary trades cannot start the job, not only they, but all other productive tradesmen, are out of work.

If then the sort of work we want to start is useful productive work the way to do it is quite simple. We have only to make it *easier* for men in the primary trades to get at the land and raw materials.

It will be easier if they *pay less* for the privilege of access to land and raw materials.

It will be open to all to start production if land and mines 'at the margin of cultivation', for which there is no competition, is *free* for any man to use.

That will not only give more opportunity for useful production, but will end all compulsory unemployment.

If compulsory unemployment ends, then no man will work for a master for less than he can get for himself working on free land (or minerals).

Then wages will no longer be governed by Marx's Iron Law or the 'cost of subsistence', but by the full reward of the labour of a free man working on free land.

That ends 'wage-slavery' and 'the exploitation of the proletariat'.

"Gentlemen," says the conjurer, "there is no deception." I am not a conjurer, but a philosopher. I say there is no flaw in this conclusive, logical argument. Salvation from unemployment depends on knocking out a vested interest. It depends on making all land cheaper and land for which there is no competition—free.

No man who owns land wants land to be cheaper, or rents lower, or to give up the prospective value of unused land or minerals. They have bought or inherited the privilege of preventing men from working, of calling on law and police to stop other men working unless these men will pay. This is not property but a privilege created by law. It was a privilege created by law or custom long ago, conceived and enforced by the lords of the land to compel others to work for them instead of for themselves. Privilege created by law is not property; and that which has been created by bad law can be removed by good law without injustice. Injustice consists not in the destruction but in the perpetuation of privilege.

King James I was very prone to confer upon his favourites not land but monopolies. One was the monopoly of making pins, another was trade with the East Indies, and so on. The Police, or the armed forces of the Crown, and above all the law, prevented others from making pins, or shipping spices from the Moluccas. It was not held to be unjust when later on the Police and the Army and the Law ceased to punish people who made pins or sailed the seas. A privilege, first cousin to blackmail, just came to an end and the world was all the better for its end.

So it is not unjust to end the privilege of preventing men from using land; nor is it inhumane, seeing what ills must come from compulsory unemployment. It is not a crime to make land cheaper; it is merely the emancipation of the poor.

How can we justly make land cheaper? The answer is simple—by making all owners more willing to sell. The Increment Tax, proposed by Mr. McKenna and adopted by Mr. Lloyd George in 1909, certainly would not make owners more willing to sell; quite the reverse. It was a tax levied *on sale*, and like all such taxes discouraged sales and increased the price. As increment taxes, called 'betterment', are the normal proposal of those who are shocked by increases in the value of land, obviously not due to the owner, it is as well to understand that the economic effect of such taxes make employment, or the use of land, more difficult. The incidence of that tax falls upon the user.

But all owners will be much more willing to sell if they have to pay *every year* a tax based upon the selling value of their land, especially if that land is lying idle and bringing in no rent. Even if the tax were small, say 1d. in the pound of selling value, more land would come on to the market and land values would slump. Then those who want to use land would be able to do so more cheaply. The incidence of that tax falls upon the owner.

One cannot put taxation upon land value till we have got a valuation of the land. That is why vested interest of landowners will always oppose any general valuation of land. But till such valuation is made, no reconstruction plans will be of any use. The country after the war must choose between reconstruction and the vested interests. You cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs; nor can you make a fine new world without breaking those vested interests which fettered the old world.

#### COMMUNISM THE ALTERNATIVE

In 1918 the Russians broke those vested interests by confiscating all land, buildings and plant, and by painfully liquidating the 'Kulaks' or peasant proprietors. When I contemplate the poverty and starvation to

which war leads—the taxes amounting to confiscation on all production—I can believe that the choice lies between Communism and Taxation of Land Values. I should be indifferent between the two alternatives, so excellently has Russia thriven both materially and morally, did I believe that Russian Communism could endure under other men than Stalin. Complete suppression of self-interest is often possible in times of common danger to a degree which could not persist in times of peace, plenty and leisure. At present, no doubt, the approval of one's fellow-workers and one's own conscience is enough to stimulate individual effort. But I noticed that girls in Soviet munition factories can now earn from 250 to 500 roubles a month, and that somebody owned a soda-water factory in Moscow and had converted it into a factory for Molotoff's cocktails. Therefore wages do vary according to effort, and small businesses can be built up even in Russia.<sup>1</sup> The collective farmers are obviously pure Communist still, though part of their produce must be sold to the State or taken in taxes.

#### SOVIET DANGERS

Now what are the dangers that threaten this ideal Russian State in the future? Jealousy, bureaucracy and civil war? Jealousy between worker and worker, between the man making risky profits and the salaried man, between town and country, between the armed and the unarmed, between different departments of the bureaucracy—all such seem probable.

Consider the bureaucracy. As their powers over their fellow men increase, so will their exercise of these powers become harsh, overbearing and bullying. In the country the tax-collector may for convenience become a farmer of taxes, a farmer of taxes may acquire fixity of tenure, so fixed that his son succeeds him. From that there is but a little step to becoming landlord. Of course nothing of this sort could happen unless all the bureaucracy were heading through power in the same direction, inadequately controlled

<sup>1</sup> I am sceptical about these dramatic choices, and indeed about 'isms' of any kind, which are seldom what they say. The only cure-all is perfection of character, as you and all philosophers know. Meantime, it is best to follow the example of Swinburne's river which flows somewhere sometime safe to sea, by circumventing each obstacle in the manner that causes least friction and least waste of effort and temper, and by continual adaptation. The problem of our century, at least for the Western World, may be to find a convenient half-way house between the dynamic individualism of pre-war America and the totalitarian Socialism of Russia—to reconcile equality with progress, security with liberty.

On the economic side, that half-way house may best be found along the lines of Communism in necessities, and individualism in the large and varied field of pleasant unecessaries, where freedom of choice and individual experiment are more essential. No civilized state will consciously permit a citizen to starve; all now give 'doles' to the unemployed, pensions to the aged poor, allowances to the sick—thus dulling the older economic incentives and sometimes making the worst of both individualist and socialist systems. Perhaps *Family Allowances* may be the thin end of the wedge for allowance of necessities to all, irrespective of economic service. Why not? A modern industrial state can afford it; and, in that field where individualist production may still be allowed to survive and to act as a salutary rival of State organization, incentives limited to the jam of life and excluding the guaranteed bread-and-butter can be very flexible and effective, as working proprietors and many managers must know.

But in peace, as in war, *necessaries first*! Let the scientists draw up a list of what constitutes a fair minimum for health and let us make a start by planning the production of those requirements for ourselves, for Europe, for the World. Of course, any definition of 'necessaries' is arbitrary, and the conveniences of one generation may be the necessities of the next. But necessities by any definition are limited in variety, standardizable, can be measured satisfactorily by the ton, bushel or cubic foot; and, with all the modern apparatus of wireless reports, statistical records and control, the planning of their production in peace should be easier than ever before. We are having to do it in war, when the task is obviously far more difficult and when half our labour and resources must be spent on destruction. Yet is the standard of health and physical welfare of the masses noticeably worse than in the 'peace' years 1929-39? (J.W.)



from on top. Control from on top<sup>1</sup> can never be adequate if the top controllers are engaged in the same evolution of self-seeking.

Lastly, there is Civil War, due to rival claims for real power, which means power to appoint to other posts of command. Distrust breeds fear; fear of dismissal breeds sedition; sedition seeks a party; the threatened party arms. The next step is secession, and then comes Civil War.

Jealousy arises from a sense of injustice. The danger of bureaucrats acquiring vested interests arises from lack of control. Civil War comes from fear of arbitrary appointments and dismissals. All these three dangers are obviated by parliamentary government as we know it in Great Britain. We may not be able to reconstruct a new world and break the opposing vested interests inherited from the old. But if we could—we can hold it better than the Russians will be able to hold their new treasure. Unless Stalin introduces from Britain into Russia something that can maintain justice, prevent corruption, and maintain peace by banishing fear. I know of no other way which can maintain what Stalin has produced.

I am a philosophic anarchist. I believe we may all some day be free, made so perfect through freedom that we shall need neither laws nor government to force us to respect each other's personal rights and liberties. But that day is far distant. Till then we must have governments; only let us choose governments that ever increase the bounds and possibilities of freedom. Before Lenin, there was another who sowed the seed. It was Leo Tolstoi who spread the light in the darkness that was once Russia. He too was a philosophic anarchist<sup>2</sup>; he too was persuaded and convinced that Henry George had shown the way.

Russian prisons were full, and in long processions men and women, who but for high-minded patriotism might have lived in ease and luxury, moved in chains towards the death-in-life of Siberia. And in penury and want, in neglect and contempt, destitute even of the sympathy that would have been so sweet, how many in every country have closed their eyes. Let Stalin 'here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth'.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### SALVAGE CIVILIZATION BY FEDERAL UNION

*"There comes a time in the affairs of men when they must prepare to defend, not only their homes, but the tenets of faith and humanity, whereon their churches, their government and their very civilizations are founded."*

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT; JAN. 3, 1939.

If it is rash to discuss reconstruction in England after the defeat of Fascism, it is even more hazardous to discuss reconstruction of a rescued world. But H. G. Wells has taught us the duty as well as the art of looking forward far into the future. We must suppose victory some time and con-

<sup>1</sup> Russia is controlled from down below—the workshop Soviet. (J.F.P.)

<sup>2</sup> Lenin was, mostly like you, a philosophic anarchist. In *The State and Revolution* he writes just as you do. So did he act; and so does Stalin; and that is the explanation of Russian morale. (J.F.P.)

sider how to shape the new relations between the nations of the world to come. It is for us to learn the lessons of the war, to note the dangers of the peace, and to prepare to make that peace enduring.

#### MORALE AND LEADERSHIP

We ought to have learnt already that morale is worth more than professional armies, and that racial differences are becoming obsolete. The almost miraculous survival of China and Russia from attack by the most highly efficient and bravest professional armies that the world has ever known proves the first proposition. Probably our own survival in 1940 helps the proof. In so far as civilian morale achieved those victories we must put them down mainly to the inspired civilian leadership of Chiang Kai-shek and his wife, of Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill. Possibly any or all of those might now be killed without altering the issue of the conflict. But had they been killed in the early days, resistance would have broken, and the morale capable of withstanding the conquerors could not have been established. If William of Orange had been killed at Heiligerlee, there would have been no Dutch Republic. When he was murdered it no longer mattered, because he had created the civilian morale which defended Haarlem, Leyden and Alkmaar.

Morale depends upon knowledge and faith. "Give me," said Cromwell, "soldiers who know for what they fight, and love what they know." That knowledge has now to be extended from 'soldiers' to all the people. It is the modern secret of successful resistance to overwhelming force. Faith can only be faith in a leader, if it can no longer be that faith in God which made the Swedish and Cromwellian armies irresistible. Fortunately faith in one's own particular nation or race is likely to wane if the United Nations can withstand and defeat Germans and Japanese.

#### END OF THE COLOUR BAR

The same final conclusion should prove, moreover, that racial distinctions are now obsolete. We have judged by military prowess—and even so forgetfully. We think that the European always beats the Asiatic, from Salamis, or Alexander and the Roman legions, to Chalons, Tours, and India—forgetting conveniently that the Hun and Moslem got as far as Chalons and Tours; forgetting also the Crusades, Gengis Khan, and the Turks at the gates of Vienna. British prestige in the East was born at Plassey—and lies buried at Singapore. The Red Army is half Mongol, the Sikh as good a fighter as the Australian, the Jap as terrible as the German. We may drop talk of military prestige; it has become poor ground for particular racial pride.

The stubborn courage of the civilian population is another matter; but that seems to derive, irrespective of race, from having something to fight for. When the Mongols overran India from the north-west, or the British overran it from the sea, what did it matter to the people of India, already existing only by permission of their Rajahs?

The comrades of the Soviet know for what they are fighting, even far back behind the German lines; so do the Chinese, Czechs and Serbs; so, one hopes, will the British and the Jews. But what have Egyptians, or Spaniards, or Italians, or Africans, or indeed Indians, to fight for at present?

Why should they fight for their masters, in a squabble between rival masters? Men and women, 'who know what they fight for, and love what they know'—these, not sheep, remain victors in total war. Such men and women are no longer confined to one continent, or to one race. That old racial distinction is obsolete. The colour bar is no bar; it was killed in total war. I am glad it is dead! Otherwise, how should the New World be any better than the old?

Had not defeat upon defeat,  
Disaster on disaster come,  
The slave's emancipated feet  
Had never marched behind the drum.

That 'whites-first' scuttle from Penang and Burma is too new and shocking to be yet understood and condemned. It will be borne in mind in the reconstructed world. We are all the same under the skin when it comes to fear. *Sauve qui peut*, whatever your colour, might be applied not only to running away, but also to saving by courage. If whites leave the coloured people behind, they should leave them able to fight for their homes and property and lives. Whatever their colour, in uniform or not, in the New World only those who fight are all equal.

If the United Nations want to win, all the people of the Union should know what they fight for, and love what they know. Most people know very little. They know best their homes where they were born and the land that yields them bread. They love that best. We had better let those who will fight have this to fight for, to give the assurance of victory.

#### OLD WAR AND NEW WAR

The Axis has no such foundation. The new *Völkerwanderung*, like the old, is founded upon pillage and the extermination, or slavery, of the dispossessed. They fight, not for love of their own lands, but for lust of the lands and bodies of others. The New Order is a new ordering of others, by new masters. So was the Saxon Conquest of England, so was the Norman Conquest; so were the Frankish and Burgundian Conquest of Gaul; so was the German Conquest of the Baltic lands; so did Magyars, Serbs, Croats, Czechs, Bulgars, Lombards, Visigoths, Vandals; and so, I suppose, originally did the uncivilized Greeks before the birth of history.

War was just pillage and rape. When two sets of pillagers met there was a battle-party under recognized Red Cross rules, which never applied to the victims of rapine. That was why war had ever such a bad name among Quakers, Socialists and Christians. Now it is different. How rarely hitherto have peoples found inspiration to fight back behind the lines! The Jews, the Swiss of the three Cantons, the Dutch Beggars of the Sea, the Puritans, the Americans, the Tyroler of Andreas Hofer, the French of the Revolution, the Greeks of Byron's day, the Italians of the Risorgimento, the Magyars of Kossuth—and now 600,000,000 of Chinese and Soviet peoples. Such wars have no bad name among the good. Such wars have rarely failed.

#### ANTICIPATE REVOLUTION

Thus we hope that we shall win. Therefrom we learn that morale is worth more than armed machines, and that colour prestige is dead. We may also deduce how we shall win. Every setback to the Good Old Cause

rallies more *men* to its rescue. But when the *machine* breaks it flies to pieces. In Japan and Germany the machine will break from inside, as soon as policemen can be killed with any chance of safety. We may pleasantly anticipate and assist a revolution from the Left. That happy moment will occur as soon as the pillagers flee from Russia and from China.

Revolution against tyranny is never from the Right, ever from the Left, and always spreads to neighbouring lands at the moment of breakdown. It seems improbable that Pétain, Franco, Salazar, Mussolini, Boris, Mannerheim, Horthy, or Antonescu will rule any longer, within a month of the German Revolution. Normally, as at the end of the last war, the British Foreign Office, unlike the British people, would seek to prevent revolution. Why? Because such revolution would kill off *Pétain et Cie*, 'with whom I had such a pleasant dinner at the Foyot in 1919'! Also, because it sets such a bad example to 'dangerous elements' in this country! Fear of what Indians, Chinese, Malays, Africans, Jews might do if armed has almost lost us the war. Fear of what the British working-class would do nearly lost us the Home Guard. If fear be our guide in peace after the war, it will lose us the peace. Fear is ever a bad counsellor. We had better 'trust the people, that people which to become dangerous has but to fold its arms'.<sup>1</sup>

These nervous fears of the Foreign Office gentlemen will lose us the peace, because they will re-dig the gulf that was between us and the new victorious Soviet. That will breed distrust and wreck the co-operation essential to peace. It will also prevent the Soviet from developing free institutions, and condemn the world to armed dictatorship. In any case, we can no more stop revolution in Europe at the end of this war than we could stop it in Russia at the end of the last war. It is as useless as the attempt to reconstruct a dream. At all costs the United Nations must remain united.

#### THE APPEARANCE OF 1949

Let us therefore transport our minds forward to 1949,<sup>2</sup> or whenever it may be, and consider what then will be the mind or misery of man. The four United Nations will stand bloody but triumphant. Every citizen, male and female, will then be paid, maintained by, and working for the State. All will owe to their own people, or to the Americans, more than they can ever hope to repay. On all sides the world will lie in ruins—pestilence and famine, slaughter and revolutions, will have wiped out all private wealth and one half the population of the globe. Vigilantes in every village will operate lynch law, wherever other laws have vanished in the presence of the fight for food. Communications may be back in the age of the ox-wagon, and ships reduced to sails. The victorious United Nations can then lick their wounds, and prepare five-year plans to employ their people and rebuild the world. They will certainly desire orderly rule among their neighbours, calling pitifully for help. That cry will be for food, drugs and protection; involving another, greater, international, five-year plan for the salvage of civilization.

Of course if the war ends this year or next year, it may not be so bad. But wise men may well try now to contemplate the worst and devise for salvage and stability. If the Americas, North and South, have escaped invasion and devastation, they will be in a position to help others. So will

<sup>1</sup> Jean Jaurès, 1912. Not proven; the General Strike has no value, except psychological.

<sup>2</sup> In the Commons, on Sept. 5, 1939, I said 'ten years'.

Soviet Russia, used to five-year plans and with experience of their awful years 1919-22; for they can recover most quickly. But both the British Empire and China may be petitioners rather than helpers.

Therefore there will be a great change in the minds of our governing class. We shall need help—both food and credits. Hitherto, for nigh on 400 years, we have been the dispensers of help. We financed the wonderful 19th century; we made the seas safe for trade; we gave advice, protection, and developed Asia, Africa and the South Seas; even the railways of America were largely British. We shall have saved our honour, our liberty and our enterprise. But our skill and knowledge will be shared with millions taught in the hard school of adversity. Our wealth and our credit will be gone. We shall be as other men, and think as other men.

#### CHANGE OF MIND

It is not our nature to hug ourselves in poverty and rest content with pride in our past, as did the Spaniards. We shall want to restore our credit and retain both self-respect and freedom. No longer exploiters, but reconciled like the rest of the world to borrow money and be exploited, we shall acquire a feeling of a common citizenship. Up to now there has been, not only a colour bar between the European and the coloured races, but almost as deadly a bar between Anglo-Americans and the rest. We behaved ourselves with some grace, dignity and benevolence towards the unfortunates who were not as we were. Now we are shedding our patronizing mind with our credit. The Chinese troops helping us in Burma, the Russians holding Hitler from our throats, have changed patronage into a quite new admiration and gratitude.

It caught us in the throat when America lavished sympathy on bombed London, packed bundles for Britain, and passed the Lease and Lend Act which absolved us from money debt. They were our only friends when we were alone. But they were of our blood, and it was only to be expected of the haughty Anglo-American fraternity, to which Russia and China did not belong. We may soon be actually grateful to Indians, no longer servants but comrades. This is indeed the change of heart that Gandhi asked for! It is even a change of mentality, which fits us for our new role in the new world. We have changed from exploiters to exploited; we have changed from patrons into comrades, we have not changed our colour, but we have changed our minds.

I am not sure that the peoples of the Soviet are exploited. Perhaps the salvagers of civilization will enquire into that, for I am not attracted by the prospect of being exploited, even by cousins in America.

#### CREDITS

The Russians had to do without credits, and suffered three years of desperate famine before they got their agriculture on its feet. Then at last they could feed themselves. In spite of an almost universal boycott they got some credits and built up great industries. We are not an agricultural country and cannot feed ourselves. Our need for credit, to restart our industries, will be greater than Russia's need. We must buy food and raw materials and tools, all of which require credit. Although the Soviet repudiated all the old Czarist debts, they did pay back regularly and with full

interest all the money they were able to borrow. My friend, W. H. Thompson, lent all he could on three-year notes and was repaid ever larger amounts in sterling as the Soviet credit and currency improved. All other countries in the world have been forced to repudiate and seen their credit and currency dwindle. Not so Russia, where they have paid 'on the nail', where national savings in their vast industries must now exceed the value of British industries. They started from scratch, with nothing but land and labour, and therefrom have created their own State capital, all in twenty years.

I have heard it said that Americans put £1,000,000,000 into Europe between 1920 and 1930. They have lost it all. Their loans (and ours) made to Europe after the last war were all based on the credit of various European countries, and all were lost. Our investments in South America went the same way. Currency depreciation, 'embargos', 'frozen credits', and totalitarian barter agreements have destroyed private credit as well as public credit. The Danish merchant may be willing to pay his debt like an honest man, but his government will not allow him to do so. Inflation comes from unbalanced national budgets, which send down the value of the national currency. No private capitalist can be expected nowadays to lend outside his own nation. They have had their lesson. If the lender knows that the whim of some foreign government may freeze his debt, or that he will be repaid in bad pounds, he will not lend. He will give no credits, unless the government of those to whom he lends can be controlled and forced to balance their budget, and not to put on embargoes or to 'freeze' credits.

Contemplate the position of ourselves and starving Europe when war ends. We may all be given food out of American charity, but we cannot pay, nor borrow in order to pay. The American Government may lend us dollars for the British Government to use in buying food from America. That will keep us alive till the loan is exhausted. But we shall not have the dollars to repay. Meanwhile the unemployed dole will rise and so will the cost of living. Anyone can see our incomes dwindling, our Budget getting ever more unbalanced, the pound falling. The moment must come when America will say to all such countries, 'We will lend no more to you if you go on raising the dole to meet the increased cost of living. You must balance your Budget and be honest! What is then the bankrupt Government to do? Balance their Budget, which has become impossible, or starve?'<sup>1</sup>

#### FINANCIAL UNION WITH AMERICA

Well, there will still be two other alternatives. One is to do as Russia did in 1919—do without external loans and credits—confiscate land and capital,\* and conscript labour and keep the people alive as best we can. We may then pray heaven that some native genius may evolve successful five-year plans. The other alternative is: persuade America to unite with us, so that the American capitalist can lend his money to us with safety. This is putting in the bailiff, but sharing in the control of the bailiff. The Super-State starts by controlling our national expenditure and our currency.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this paragraph exaggerates. Our Government can prevent the price of necessities from rising by continuing to subsidize food and essentials, by taking in taxation and forced loans income that might be spent on non-essentials, by making luxuries difficult and expensive to buy. Government in fact can, if it has the courage to disregard the vested interests of drink and land, prevent the consumption of wealth, and ensure the conversion of wealth into the capital that we shall need.

It is impossible to keep a stable currency between two countries, unless expenditure is controlled and the Budget of *each country* is balanced by an overriding authority. That overriding authority must be the Federal Parliament, controlling Federal Finance and the services dependent on Federal funds.

All that I have written above must apply in some degree to all countries not dependent on Russia (or Sweden or Switzerland, if these have not been occupied by Germany in the meantime), but in less degree; these will need credits less than we shall, being more agricultural, and agriculture can manage with less fresh capital. Moreover, unless we are invaded or more heavily bombed our population is less likely to be reduced in numbers. I should suppose that China or Yugoslavia will have at least enough land for the surviving population. We are the most industrialized country of all. Therefore loss of credits affects us most.

It is, or was, the practice in the pottery trade for the small manufacturer, before he had acquired credit, to sell his goods himself on Saturday in the market, to enable him to pay his week's wages. Business, on the scale we know it, can hardly manage in that manner.

Even could we get back into full production with modernized plant, few industries could get raw materials needed from abroad, where a diminished population is searching for roots and berries to keep alive. Nor will such populations be able to buy. Quite possibly all that remains of Europe will go back to an 18th-century existence. Our export trade may have no competitors; the whole German trade with South America may pass into our hands. But who in the world will be able to buy fine china or private motor-cars! The home market will not recover; it will not be allowed to recover, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer will still want all possible savings to be lent to the Government. We shall still be rationed long after peace.

So, as I see it, the inevitable post-war drift for all nations will be towards dependence on others. The choice may well lie between copying the Soviet; or submitting to financial dictation from creditor America as a sequel to inability to balance our Budget. In going Bolshevik we may have to become agricultural, for there will be few credits for industry. In joining with America we get all the credits we want and do not repudiate, but a super-state puts in 'the man in possession'.

Would America consent to Federal Union? I fancy that may turn on the proposed exchange value of the £ sterling—asked for and accepted. Apart from all sentiment, it becomes a business merger; not because we are two competitors cutting each other's throat; but because the bond-holders have to take over the ordinary shares to safeguard their interest.

It is quite possible that America will unbalance her Budget as rapidly as do we ourselves. In that case British solidity may be of use to America—less dependent, and a more popular comrade for hard times! The main point is not whether the Americans grant us credits, or we grant them credits, it is the pegging of the exchange to make mutual trade possible and the control of each country's finances by some super-national representative body which shall be responsible to both countries. Only such control will fix the exchange rate and give security to creditors, whether American or British. All creditors must otherwise fear special taxation, if not of actual 'freezing' of debt payments.

It has been usual to advocate Federal Union with America, or wider



federations, on the ground of political security: 'United we stand, divided we fall'; or on 'the ground of sympathy, common sentiment, common language, and similar democratic institutions. Worthy citizens regard it as the first stage towards 'The Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World'. I am convinced that it is more likely to come about for financial reasons. Either America will want to feed us and to get its money back, or American investors will want certainty that the British Government will not rob them. Or it may be that all those who lent money are reasonably afraid of both Parliament *and* Congress failing to balance Budgets—afraid of inflation running away—and see in a super-national Federation the best means of checking this new terror of the time to come.

#### SOUND CURRENCY

Financiers and economists everywhere are alive to the fundamental necessity of a stable exchange if trade is to continue. Few seem aware that this stable exchange cannot be secured by decree, or law, or even a gentlemen's agreement. It does involve control of the Budgets of the contracting parties, possibly even the power to put in dictator managers of those lesser authorities who may outrun the constable—whether in Alberta, Philadelphia, or Merthyr Tydvill. Hitherto, France, or Belgium, or Austria have made promises, received stabilizing loans on the strength of those promises, and then failed to balance income and expenditure.

Nor is the test of honesty just so simple as balancing State Taxes and State Expenditure. Inflation depends on total production and consumption. The theory of sound currency is that any increase in the currency, whether by loan, credits, or by printing £1 notes, must be balanced by created goods representing that increase. If it is not balanced it is inflationary. The control should not therefore confine itself to public finance.

All the arguments in favour of a stable exchange, with control on expenditure by the joint partners to the agreement, apply not only to Britain and America, but to any other partners. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa have at present different and varying rates of exchange, because their Governments have in varying degrees unbalanced their Budgets. They could obviously go into Federation on the same terms as ourselves and America with great advantage to trade, credit and reconstruction. In pre-war days none of us felt very happy about the financial position of Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland. They looked to us for ever more credits as their credit grew less. Just as America may look sourly at us later on for a like reason. This spot of bother could be put right for the future if the Federation controlled expenditure. Of course the initial exchange rate of Australia might have to be different. South Africa faces an ugly situation if America ceases to buy gold, and may be very glad to come in at any price.

The widest possible extension of a common currency, once the control is conceded, is obviously desirable. No argument save English-speaking sentiment could be brought against the inclusion in such a Federal Union of Holland and Scandinavia. We trench here, however, on the plans for a Federal Union of Europe, with or without Russia, which figure so largely in the books and dreams of the exiles. Realism gives the answer. Those European States which go Communist will naturally line up with the Soviets,

much as we shall with America, and for identical reasons. So little of Europe will be left outside these two Federations that nothing adequate will be left to form a specifically European Federation. Swedes, Norse, Danes and Dutch have almost as close kinship to America as we have ourselves; therefore they may prefer the Western partnership and form of discipline.

#### FEDERAL REVENUES

Before we discuss whether we should aim at the inclusion of Soviet Russia in any such financially controlled Federation or Group, it would be wise to consider the revenues and necessary powers of the Federal Parliament and Executive. Apart from some ceremonial units or glorified police, the whole of the Armed forces should be a federal charge and responsibility. Relations with countries outside the Union would come under the Federal Foreign Affairs department; so too would colonies and territories, to be discussed in the next chapter. For all these, as for the Presidential salary and the costs of the Federal Parliament, a large revenue would be required; yet larger, if unemployment assistance is to be federal, and immense, if debt charges are to be pooled and reconstruction loans are to be a federal issue.

Even neglecting these two last liabilities, the federal expenditure will be sufficiently considerable. It can be met in two ways: by cash contributions from the State partners, or by the proceeds of one or two general taxes. A federation of Sovereign States can be most easily dissolved by secession. The easiest incentive to secession is the annual demand for cash contributions from each State to the Federal Exchequer. Immediately, each State starts to claim its moral right to exemption from contribution, and builds up its case against its partners! On that basis ten years of peace would break up any Federation. Therefore the Union must have the proceeds of some general tax and the officials and machinery to collect it. Those general taxes which suggest themselves are customs, income tax, death duties, land value tax.

May we hope for free trade within the Union? That depends upon American opinion. No other post-war partner would care to close its frontiers if America threw open her ports to her partners. The American industry may rightly admit that the superior equipment of American factories outweighs the cheaper European labour. Maybe American labour will come to look on Londoners or Danes much as Milwaukee mill-hands look on lads in the same trade in Birmingham, Alabama, and just see no harm in buying from them.

But Isolationism dies hard in America. I fear we may not expect free trade within the Union till relations between America and partners have got a 'little bit more mixed'—that is, when the partners owe America more money and can only send it in goods. If Tariffs remain a State and not a federal function, then revenue from a common tariff on imports entering the Union from outside becomes impracticable. If Tariffs are federal, then here is a source of revenue.

A surcharge on the various State Income Taxes would be difficult because the methods of assessment and exemption vary so completely in each State. It would have to be a direct federal tax, uniform, and replacing other income taxes. The British Treasury would at once point out that Income Tax was the heart and core of British Revenue, and could by no

possibility be surrendered. 'We will surrender,' they will say, 'Death Duties with pleasure, since all our millionaires go to escape and die in the Channel Islands.' This they will agree to also because they suspect that there will be no more large estates left at death in Britain; all large estates will be American, and Death Duties are steeply graduated.

For Federal Revenue we may therefore be thrown back upon the taxation of land values. Since land values everywhere are an exact measure of the benefits conferred by State and society upon each landowner, therefore the recovery of some part of that benefit by the State is no tax but a just recovery of a State-created value. An annual tax of 4 per cent on land values would restore to the State the entire land value of the world and bring down the buying (or hiring) price of land for the blessing of those who wish to live from labour upon it. In very few cases does the American township tax on land values reach 2 per cent. Consider what would be the return from a general tax of only 1 per cent levied throughout the world!

Judging from general valuations made in the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and Australia, land value varies with density of population and responds to rise and fall of population. A vast comparison of values and population shows that before the war land value worked out at an average of \$400 per head of population whether one considers a sparsely populated New Zealand or New York City. If the population of the world should be 2000 millions, a land value tax of 1 per cent should produce an annual revenue of \$8,000,000,000. A time might come when this would be adequate for Federal Defence and Administration, and any depreciation of the dollar would automatically increase the federal revenue.

#### SAFETY, PEACE AND JUSTICE

Before we take any further visions of a distant and perfected federation it would be well to consider whether there are adequate inducements to federate, apart from stabilization of exchange, reconstruction and the immediate problem of salvaging civilization. Credit and finance may be all-powerful in the long run, but have little educational or propaganda value.

Safety, peace and justice are the common desires of all mankind; they are obtainable under freedom, faith and federation. How can that be taught, and the vision be made sufficiently desirable to overcome isolationist national selfishness in the predominant partners? It would be idle to pretend that education for Federal Union is required as much in Britain or Holland as in the United States—or as much in Greece and Czechoslovakia as in Russia. That is not so. The immediate need for help will suffice to educate the British, the Dutch, the Greeks and the Czechs. The Americans and Russians are those called on to give help—and, at the same time, to treat those they help as equal fellow citizens. Most education will be needed in that direction—especially in America.

Russians, having been nearer the abyss, having already federated with and absorbed coloured peoples as equals, having already buried old beliefs in exclusive racial superiority, should be more anxious for safety, peace and justice. They would certainly deny at once that they needed education or propaganda in that direction. But one fears that success in war and unbridled authority may corrupt their primitive altruism. Imperialism breeds contempt, and derives from power. It is easy, infectious and flattering. It finds subservience from subordinates gratifying, equality and liberty better

in theory than in practice. Doctrine becomes dogma, and faith degenerates into the incantations of a new priesthood. Russians, after victory, may well suppose that they can have perpetual safety, peace and justice without any federation with equals.

It is unlikely to be perpetual under such circumstances. Rome admitted all provincials to full citizenship and endured for four hundred years of Empire. But what an Empire! Neither safe, nor at peace, nor just—nor free! The virtues of democracy, and of freedom from fear, need teaching to the Socialist Republics of the Soviets. Safety, peace and justice are not sure, even for them, except under continued faith in, and federation with, equals freely governing themselves.

Americans, bred in 150 years of isolationism, are at present more reluctant than any Russian to federate on equal terms with their inferiors. But they approve of their own Federation, begin to appreciate that their own safety, peace and justice are endangered by isolation from others, and have an increasing sense of duty to the rest of the world. It may be that, as the war drags on, America, as well as Britain and China, will become more doubtful of permanent security in isolation. The natural repercussion in America will then be towards federation with Britain and the British Dominions. We have not done so well in this war, but neither Americans nor Australians really regard us as 'inferiors'. (The Irish do; but as they will not fight or federate at all, they are out of court.)

It is not the British or Dutch or Danes that Americans object to embracing as equals. But how are they to stomach federation on equal terms with 400,000,000 Indians? It seems that sound admiration for Chinese courage is breaking down the Oriental Immigration Law so far as the entry of Chinese into America is concerned. That is a welcome sign of human progress and profitable change. Pearl Harbour and the Filipino comrades in the foxholes of Bataan have created a reorientation towards the Orient.

Chiang Kai-shek will choose whether China shall federate with Russia, or America, or with Asiatic States. But we may be very sure that he *will* see that safety, peace and justice must depend on federation, and will wish it to be federation under freedom. India (or shall we say Nehru or Jinnah) will choose whether India shall federate by itself alone, or with China or with Russia, or with the White democracies. India and revolutionized Japan will be influenced mainly by Chiang Kai-shek's ideas on federation. I do not think that any argument, or education or pressure, from Britain or America would be the slightest use in moving Chiang or Nehru in either or any direction. That does not matter, for both seek safety and justice through freedom and federation with a passion surpassing my own. I should wish to be in any federation with them. But I do not think that America, Canada and Australia would—at least not as equals.

#### PROPAGANDA ON MORAL GROUNDS

It remains evident that there is no safety and can be no peace in our time without federation; and no safety or peace in permanency save under free institutions. So long as there are in the world rival federations, peace is none so sure, but it can be made more secure by any cross between a Confederacy of Federations and a Geneva League. It is idle to speculate on what federations or groups will arise after the war. Yet we can educate. We can propagate the idea, especially in America and Russia, that safety,

peace and justice depend on federation; even that the issue rests in the hands of Russia and America, not in the hands of those who *need* federation most.

As you will never persuade the strong that you desire their interest in asking their assistance for the weak, it is wisest to base arguments on moral grounds. The late Mr. Chamberlain erred in telling the Americans that it would be against their interest that we should pay our debt. It was psychologically unsound, and carried little conviction. So I fear my argument that civilization cannot be salvaged without security, that security cannot be obtained without stabilized currency, and that stabilized currency depends on federal control of Budgets, will not carry conviction to those who *need not* provide the credits.

The moral ground is that peace cannot be secured, nor humanity restored, nor Christian principles endure without federation. A peace which leaves the world dotted with an infinity of small jealous sovereign nations deserves to repeat, and must repeat, the disgraceful epoch of 1919-39. 'The Parliament of man and federation of the world' is the goal of brotherhood. For that goal America is always prepared to make many sacrifices. Indeed, it is for that goal and in that spirit that the best of America is fighting today, as in the days of revolution and emancipation—*not* to repay their debt to France, as in 1917, *nor* to help Britain by reason of blood-ties. With the utmost reluctance they have found it their duty to take up 'the white man's burden'. The mantle of Elijah has fallen upon Elisha. Mankind is indeed fortunate that Franklin Roosevelt has been found to carry a stage further towards fruition the labours of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

It is not necessary that the federation clustering round America and the British peoples should include India and China. Those peoples are so essentially pacific that a disturbance of world peace by them is inconceivable. Even without them the democratic federation would be one whose power would inspire respect, whose character would ensure justice and whose wide scope could combine prosperity with security. Even should the Soviets become in some distant future an imperial tyranny, yet even so freedom, the Christian virtues and our way of life could survive on earth. In the more likely event of the Soviets developing a fresh democracy a natural further step would unite the world in one brotherhood.

#### WHY THE LEAGUE FAILED

However dark the condition of the world at the end of this total war, however great the suffering, if from the ashes we can raise a society a stage nearer brotherhood and further from the jungle it will have been worth while. So long as we could only hope to save the world from Fascism, that was good enough to endure all rather than submit. But the prospect of the federation of nations gives one hope of lasting peace and perduring freedom. It was not the Versailles Treaty, still less the League of Nations, that can be held responsible for the rise of Fascism and this war. The framers of Versailles and the League did their best with the tiger of revenge which had woken up from sleep in France. Wishful thinking led Churchill, Austen Chamberlain and Vansittart to mistake France's bluster for strength; and we allowed the League to dictate unchecked the revenge policy of a Chauvinist Government.

France used the League till the League broke in its hands—at last by

the act of traitor Laval. The British Government, in the days of its decisive power, somewhat contemptuously, allowed French hegemony in Europe, and assisted the alienation of America from Europe by the repudiation of their debts. This last stupidity reached its climax, not in 1934, when we failed to meet our obligation, but in 1922, when Lord Balfour averred that we would drop our claim for repayment from France if America would do the same and let us off also. This cynically benevolent pose, at the expense of America, may not have been calculated to annoy Americans, but might have been expected to arouse the contempt of those who value honesty. More than the squabble over reparations, or the occupation of the Ruhr and the consequent inflation, it broke the morale of Europe.

The League of Nations failed for three reasons—and each adequate :

1. America took no part.
2. It had no all-powerful police.
3. It was a League of fear-ful governors, and not of fear-free, unselfish peoples.

#### UNION NOW

If I pin my hopes now to Federal Union with America, it is because Union is the strongest bond, leaving no loophole for evasions of duty in future. I do not believe that it will be more difficult to achieve than was the Union between England and Scotland in 1706. Vested interests by the hundred, in both countries, will no doubt oppose ; but the need for mutual aid in arms, and of economic support afterwards, will become ever more obvious, even to the 'interests', as the Mississippi 'still just goes rolling along'.

Can such Union of the English-speaking peoples not be extended by holding an open door for all democratically governed countries to come in ? India, and our Colonies—some as States, some as Territories under federal rule—might find their place.

Holland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, China, might well welcome such a Union, whose power would establish peace and safety, whose spaciousness would secure prosperity, whose admixture would fertilize the stock of freedom.

Free internally, bound externally, each democracy could combine freedom with fraternity, and an equal right to the use of God's earth.

How about Germany ? I refuse to believe that great people is welded into the cult of the bully. The Weimar Republic showed no such sign. I refuse to believe that the hideous persecution of Jews and Poles is the natural beastliness of the German people, or that even today they do not hate it in secret. Once free, once they have exterminated Hitler and his gang, and wiped out his memory and his crimes, why should not they too come in and merge in the union of the free ?

Would this be adequate to prevent 'Germany doing it again' ? Union, whether federal or confederate, means, at the least, one Executive responsible to one supreme Parliament, controlling army, navy, air force, and foreign affairs, with revenues to meet the cost thereof. Such a Union would be too mighty for a Germany outside ever to attack. With Germany inside, as one of the confederate states, secession would be our only danger, and secession has been tried before and died at Gettysburg.

Union, with the open door for other free countries, offers to the millions now under tyrants hope for after the war, hope for our victory. That hope

is the one bit of worthwhile propaganda which must, in the end, break Hitler and restore to mankind peace, justice, security and that freedom under which alone mankind can march forward to the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

This is indeed America's 'Rendezvous with Destiny'.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### FITTING IN HITLER'S SUBHUMANS

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ."*

GALATIANS iii, 28.

FASCISM envisages a world of three castes—the Germanic master-people, other semi-Aryans employed by the master-people in skilled occupations, and coloured people, unlettered, subhuman, using their muscles to produce as slaves the raw materials for the pleasure of others.

Of all those who are to revolve in their masters' iron cage, the coloured subhumans have the worst prospects in the worst possible New Order. The children of Gideon, perpetual hewers of wood and drawers of water, have now just sufficient education to foresee a certain and irresistible fate should Fascism win. They at least have every reason to prefer death to such a nightmare world. From China to Palestine and on to Takoradi and Jamaica goes up the cry, "Give us arms ; let us die fighting, rather than live on as slaves without hope."

Yet the reluctance to let them bear arms is greater in this war than in the last. The 'master-mind' of Germany has spread its infection successfully into the governing class of Britain. Nowhere in the Atlantic Charter do native rights appear. Missionaries are silent, trusteeship has become a formula, the *Ossibrandweg* flourishes, segregation is approved, the colour bar extends, colonial development is measured by exports, and liberalism is dead.

### BRITISH TRUSTEESHIP

It has all happened since the last war. Down to that time the great traditions, inspired by missionaries of the type of Bishop Colenso and Livingstone and C. T. Studd, working on the conscience of the British ruling class, had established a theory of common brotherhood involving trusteeship for those rescued by the Gospel from savagery. There was slave-trading to be put down. All England joined in denouncing and ending King Leopold's inhuman tyranny in the Congo. Under Cardinal Lavigerie the Roman Church played its proper part. We lived in the age of emancipation, with Lowell's hymns in our ears.<sup>1</sup> The liberal governments, even to the end, gave coloured people votes, extended freedom, resisted the robbery of land and exploitation by settlers and chartered companies. In 1908 we saved freedom for ten million people and preserved the lands of Northern Nigeria.

<sup>1</sup> 'In the right with two or three' ; 'If ye do not feel the chain' ; and so on.



When the late war came we were on the point of doing the same for all West African lands.

That war was the turning-point. Simultaneously two tragedies occurred—tragedies for natives and for our good name. The Liberal Party vanished, and the demand for native labour developed. Since 1917 we have never had a liberal-minded Secretary of State for the Colonies save Ormsby-Gore—nor even a Free Trader. The Labour Party had no great understanding of native questions. It was familiar with wages, and otherwise disliked the labour competition of lascars in British ships. But grants for development seemed to the Labour Party sufficient remedy for any spot of trouble. That more employment is not desired by Africans seems to British labour irrational, since the worker here has long lost the conception of working for himself on his own land. So 'Congo' Morel died of a broken heart; and now only Creech Jones and R. W. Sorensen are left to maintain conscience in that House where Wilberforce, Bright and Dilke once upheld the doctrine of Christian brotherhood.

Nor has the liberal crash affected the House of Commons alone. A whole generation has grown up at the Universities and gone into the Services quite ignorant of the principles of freedom and political economy. Whether they call themselves conservatives or socialists, they are all intent on material progress in such direction as the white man on the spot may show to be expedient. The man on the spot is apt to consider expedient that which avoids economic competition between Africans and whites, and provides for himself cheap unskilled labour.

Charles Strachey was the last liberal official in the Colonial Office; he was got rid of amid the hardly concealed contempt of the new generation of Civil servants. The great liberal governors are gone—Lugard, Milner, Frank Swettenham, Girouard, Murray of Port Moresby, and that Donald Cameron who dared to compare Nairobi with 'the village that voted the earth was flat'. Officials on the spot resent the interfering 'ignorance' of missionaries such as Archdeacon Owen or pro-natives like myself. The purge of liberalism has gone through all the service. Liberals such as Sir Charles Orr, Sir Selwyn Greer, Charles Temple, Sir Robert Hamilton, Ainsworth, McGregor Ross, Norman Leys, Dennett and Thompson have gone with the wind; and at their desks work laboriously uninspired officials filling up forms, collecting statistics and ticking off the days till they can go home on leave.

#### AFRICAN LAND AND LABOUR

In South Africa and Southern Rhodesia the policy of the governments of those two settler countries is one of political, economic and social segregation. They carefully segregate the European and the coloured races. Their object is the maintenance of political, economic and social supremacy—by the European minority over the African majority. Clamour for 'self-government' by European settlers in Northern Rhodesia, Kenya and Nyassaland is no noble desire for freedom, but voices their desire to settle the native problem as it has been 'settled' in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. South Africans desire to annex the Protectorates—Swaziland, Basutoland and Bechuanaland—for the same reason. To give a cloak of respectability to selfishness, they call segregation and subjection by the hypocritical phrase—'parallel development'.

In both South Africa and Kenya it has been frankly argued that a

more liberal land policy would endanger the flow of African labour to European farms. Africans are wanted for unskilled low-paid work. Therefore they must not be allowed to compete with whites in skilled work; nor must they be able to cultivate their own land on such a scale as to be able to win independence, nor to compete with the exports of European settlers. This economic colour bar is legally enforced in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, while in Northern Rhodesia and Kenya the modern Colonial Office administrators vainly attempt to avoid the same infection. For instance, in Rhodesia Africans are precluded from driving locomotives, and 'The Northern Rhodesia Labour Party' admits no Africans to membership and demands for Northern Rhodesia the same exclusive 'self-government' as is enjoyed by the whites in Southern Rhodesia. In Kenya the same results are attained by a hut tax which forces the African out to work for the planters for wages.

#### FASCISM AND THE COLOUR BAR

To make them work, the Africans have not only been deprived of the best lands, but they are prohibited from buying back or even renting the lands from which they once made a living. Needless to say, the policy of giving votes to coloured people, inaugurated in Cape Colony in 1853, has been completely reversed. The whites resent as intolerable the idea that a European should ever so demean himself as to ask an African or Indian for his vote and support; nor would they travel in the same railway carriage; nor dance in the same hall; nor drink in the same bar. Nor would they worship in the same church!

This extension of Nazi racialism to South and East Africa has been winked at by the British Colonial Office ever since liberalism died. The settlers on the spot, the capitalists developing the copper belt, Hertzog and the *Ossiebrandwag* in South Africa, have found support for Nazi ideals and ideas. Africans, all uneducated, have been flung into the 'civilization' of exploitation, much as their counterparts in England 150 years ago were flung into the factory system.

South and East Africa natives have been the chief sufferers. But the same industrialization of the ignorant has been going on in Malaya and Ceylon, in Burma, Jamaica and Trinidad. Labour leaders are gaoled; communism is declared illegal; destitution pursues the landless. In West Africa there are no white settlers. But there, too (save in Nigeria), landless men and women are driven into the labour market by the comfortable conception that the tribal chief has the same rights as an English landlord! The native 'king' of yesterday enjoys the exclusive privilege of deciding on what terms his 'subjects' shall use any land which he has not yet sold to development companies. We enjoy the cocoa; the new landless labourer experiences the fluctuations of trade and employment.

It is not too much to say that, since liberalism died, in no single one of our Colonies has anything at all been done to preserve the native on his land. Wherever the land question has been touched at all, steps have been taken to get the native off his land and drive him into the labour market. Only in Fiji and Nairobi has even the example of the Dominions been followed, and local taxation been levied upon land values. Twenty-five years of the new imperialism have grafted the curse of landlordism, and the exploitation of the landless, on to the British Colonial Empire. Burmese

today fight against us and help the Japanese. If you should seek the reason, you will find it in the immense acquisitions by Indian capitalists of the land of these Burmese peasants.

#### 'PROGRESS' REPLACES TRUSTEESHIP

This abandonment in practice of the trustee principle has been due to the growth of materialism and decay of liberalism. In Parliament, Labour has replaced the free trade Liberal Party, and while in some respects a good substitute, the Colonial land question was completely strange to them. As has been said, Labour's overriding problem has been unemployment. Labour cannot easily grasp the fact that, in Africa for instance, men need never be unemployed so long as they have land and a spade. Our tradesmen are so divorced from primitive agriculture, so far from the days when Englishmen employed themselves, that organization has become their livelihood, and capital their competitor. A bridge over the Zambesi meant to them work for the unemployed on Tees-side—not long lines of expatriated barefooted Africans carrying loads through African swamps, and dying at last far from home. Meanwhile every Secretary of State recounted in his annual speech fine figures of exports and imports, spatchcocked with digressions on some college at Achimota which should enable a few hundreds of these hundred millions to become almost as efficient as a white master.

The trustees failed to guard trusteeship; and an unchecked executive, purged of idealists, went on its pleasant imperial way, slightly bored by the job, disliking those they ruled, and resenting criticism. Thirty years ago they read the *Manchester Guardian*; now they have dropped *The Times* for the *Telegraph*, and the *Spectator* for *Truth*. These were they who (like Lord Jim in Conrad's novel) abandoned to the Japanese the Mui Tsai of Hongkong and the Chinese of Singapore.

#### FEDERATION OF THE COLONIES

How do these Colonies, where democracy has never been, come into the post-war picture?

We will assume that revolution leaves the Japanese satisfied to live in Nippon. Then, even if we do not federate with America, things can never be as before. India may be supposed able to dispense with our services. We shall hardly have the 'face' to return to Singapore or Burma as pseudo-conquerors, patronizing peoples who do not respect us any more. Should we hand over the Protectorates to the Afrikanders?—Northern Rhodesia, Nyassaland, Tanganyika and Kenya to the white settlers? Will the Dutch be as before in Java and the islands; or the French in Madagascar and Indo-China; or we in Ceylon? I hope we shall not try to get back to the *status quo ante bellum*. One cannot twist history enough for that. The 'natives' would remember 1942 and laugh behind their hands.

No, the best hope is a federation of free peoples—with those peoples who are still uneducated in self-government, governed as Territories, just as the United States administer Territories. We may hope such Federation will be with the Americans and the Dutch sharing the trusteeship; if not, at least set the British Commonwealth free from the colour bar and include all such peoples as wish to come in.

The difficulties of making a British Commonwealth of that sort are enormous. Is it to be supposed that South Africa will care to remain in the federation—or Ireland, or India, or Newfoundland? Even at present, when we provide the credits and are still supposedly rich, the bond is of the weakest. We have no federal Parliament, no free trade between the States of the Commonwealth, no currency stability. Ireland behaves emphatically, as though there were no connection at all. No secession would be resisted. No contributions are made to any common exchequer. Each Dominion has its own representatives abroad. Such a 'Union' is not worth belonging to: such 'Union' adds no strength to the partners.

Let us dismiss it, and figure on the chance of Federal Union with America, which is indeed the best that we can hope for. We should ever bear in mind that the request for Union with America may well come from Canada or Australia—whether we like it or not. For the reasons already given, I hope for Federal Union with the United States, and believe it to be the only way out of chaos and into security and peace. Churchill may be our best chance of endurance; he is certainly our best chance of Anglo-American co-operation after victory.

In such a Federal Union most of our Colonies would become Territories, just like Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Alaska. Others would become self-governing with Budget control and foreign affairs in the hands of the Federal Executive. These would be exactly like Britain, Australia and Canada. The Philippines, India, Palestine, Burma, Malaya, Ceylon, Newfoundland, Jamaica, would soon be such full-fledged States.

The colour-barred Union of South Africa, the Rhodesias, and Kenya are certainly the first problem to consider. In all the other prospective members of the Federation, internal self-government means that *all* citizens have equal rights—civil and political. Could the Rhodesias and Kenya and Tanganyika remain federally administered Territories until Africans are held fit to vote? Government by one caste is not self-government. The same applies to the Union of South Africa, and makes it very doubtful if South Africa would wish to come into the Federation at all. Possibly a way out of the difficulty would be a temporary educational and property qualification for the franchise. That would follow the lines of our own British development, from a franchise which excluded, to one that included the working classes, 1832-1905. It would be least break down the colour bar.

#### INDIA

It is impossible, in August, 1942, to write without grave assumption on the future of India. Throughout the ultimate defeat by revolution of both Germany and Japan has been assumed. But meanwhile it is possible that the greater part of India will be overrun by Japanese armies just as have been China, Siam, Malaya, the East Indies and Burma. That will not bring about union in India unless Hindoos fight. If they do not, Moslems and Sikhs, who do fight, will dominate, and no Cripps Constituent Assembly will ever meet to decide the future government of India. That must be so, because the old Imperialism surrendered at Singapore, and neither Moslem nor Sikh forget that they once ruled and did not surrender.

It has been my good, but tragic, fortune to have been in the movement for Indian freedom almost from its inception at the first Indian National Congress in 1886. I have known, probably understood (being of like mind),

every Indian patriot from those Chitpavan Brahmins, Gokhale and Tilak, to Srinivasa Sastri, Mohamed Jinnah, Gandhi, and the Nehrus. Above all, I have loved Lala Lajpat Rai of Lahore. I have lived in their houses, had their confidence, and discussed with them eternal life as well as politics. Of course I have enjoyed it. 'No tragedy there,' the reader may say—save the death of Lalaji.

#### COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION

The tragedy has been the folly of the British garrison on the one side and the manufactured hatred of Britain on the other. The folly of the civil garrison was their quite natural inclination to favour the Moslem minority; that of the military garrison was exemplified by the massacre in the Jallianwallah Bagh. The manufactured hatred was not caused by the suppression of the Mutiny, nor by the massacre, nor by the imprisonments, nor even by the racial insolence of the colour bar. It was a political necessity to the Congress Party in order to unite Indians of all sorts—and also the only way to avoid a constructive policy which would split Indians.

It was quite natural for the British to prefer the old rulers of India to politically-minded 'Congress wallahs'. It was as natural for the English-speaking educated politicians to resent this—to call it, and see in it, a desire to 'Divide and Rule'. Divide and Rule meant 'playing up' to the Moslem Minority, and the 'fighting races'. Lord Minto promised Communal electorates to the Moslems in 1906. With their help, all Indian representative institutions above the village Taluk and the District Boards were elected by 'Communal' electorates. Once this system was established it became well-nigh impossible to change back to representation of the people as a united whole.

As this is a *Testament to Democracy* let me explain this Communal Representation, lest other would-be democracies slide to ruin. Several separate lists of electors are drawn up: Moslem, non-Moslem, and in some provinces, Sikhs, Untouchables and Christians. So many seats in each Provincial Legislature and in the Central Assembly are allotted to each community. Moslems can only vote for Moslems, Hindoos for Hindoos, Sikhs for Sikhs, etc. There is a Hindoo Party (Congress, or Mahasaba) and a Moslem Party at daggers drawn in each Legislature, and in the Punjab Legislature the Sikh peasants hold the balance. In seven Provinces the Hindoos have a permanent, statutory, everlasting majority; in two the Moslem are in that enviable position. In the Punjab and Bengal, Sikh and other minorities hold the balance between Hindoo and Moslem. Elsewhere the minority can never get office. Co-operation is made almost impossible when the minority can never become a majority; the minority might as well be completely voteless.

Nor is that all. Suppose that in England or in America, Catholics and non-Catholics were on separate lists of electors, what would happen? The Catholics would elect the best fighters from their community, who would think, speak and act not for their country but for their community. The extremists would get the seats, the keenest denouncers of the heretics would make the loudest appeal to the largest mob. The other side too would elect the men who made the strongest appeal on the one subject on which *they* were all agreed. At present we here have to consider the feelings of all our electors. Take away the Catholics, or Jews, or women from our electorate,

and give them their own representatives, then we should all be absolved from considering the feelings of the other fellow. The bigoted extremists would be elected, and make divisions worse when elected. That is exactly what has happened in India through Communal electorates. That is not democracy, but Government of the people, by the bigots, for their own sect. So it happens that in India today all official appointments are justified not by works but by faith.

The Catholics in Britain would resent and resist any suggestion to take them out of the general electorate and put them on a special Catholic electorate—even if they were all Irish they would know that it would lessen their power. They understand the working of democracy. Not so the 90,000,000 Moslems of India, or at least their leaders. For Moslems were the old rulers, and claim to be the master race. They despise the Hindoo—cleverer and better educated. They do not wish to have to ask such fellows for their votes, or to be beholden to them in any way. Only, the majority of Moslems are converted Hindoos, not at all Mongol in race! These are the Borahs and Kojahs—the great merchants of Bombay, Colombo, Kenya and Rangoon—not the peasants of Scindh and the Punjab. Jinnah himself is a Kojah (when not an Englishman). That is why the Moslem League does not speak for a United Community, and offers obstinate resistance to any democratic advance. A great many Moslems are with Congress. But the Communal system of representation ensures power and election to all leaders! The Moslem leaders know it, and will not let their power go. They demand Pakhistan, and are merely irritated by talk of voting or majority rule, or indeed of democracy. These leaders will never accept Cripp's Constituent Assembly.

#### SIKH OBJECTION

For similar but for stronger reasons 6,000,000 Sikhs object. All these tall proud peasants of the eastern Punjab seem to have served in the British Army, and never do they forget that, under Runjeet Singh, they defeated that Army at Chillianwallah and Ferozeshar. They ruled the Moslem; they are the puritans of the Fifth Monarchy, with unlimited contempt for others—and with all the ignorance which goes with such contempt. If India is thrown into the melting-pot, I should conceive it possible that we might see some Maharajah of Patiala as King of a Sikh State stretching from the Jehlum to Delhi. Indeed, that would remove the Sikh objection to Indian democracy. Neither the Sikhs nor the Moslems are in the least afraid of ever being a persecuted minority. It would seem to them as laughable as it would in similar case be to the Scots. But the Sikh objection is a deadly blow to the dream of Pakhistan.

Possibly the British Government, when drafting the Cripps plan, did not realize that Congress itself was far more anxious for an effective voice in the defence of India than for any constitution; more anxious for arms in their hands than for votes. Obviously, if Congress accepts anything more than a hand in defence, they make enemies for themselves in their own camp. Even if there were no invaders at the gates, they would be anxious to be armed to resist Moslem aggression. Could anything be more dangerous to Congress than an attempt to construct a democratic constitution, and thus annoy both Sikhs and Moslems—and the native princes. Immediately, caste, creed, race and interest would be at each other's throats—all trying

to get the best of the bargain for their own interest and coterie. Much better 'stay put' and have a common grievance against the British. That grievance is the only thing which holds together the Marwari merchant and the Communist, the Madras and the Punjabi. Fear of the working class is not absent in this land of ours; it is far greater in India, where the working class have no votes as yet, but might demand them. Brahmins are not necessarily nor naturally democrats.

So much for our offer of a free constitution! Congress says: "Thank you for nothing! We want to defend India, to help China, to help Russia, and you still keep up that old offensive attitude that 'fighting is the job for Master'!" I imagine that some of them may now be adding "Damn your insolence! You don't know how to fight! Infirm of purpose, give me the dagger!"

#### THE MONTAGU DECLARATION

Almost the brightest spot in our liberation history was Edwin Montagu's declaration of August 1917:

"The policy of H.M. Government is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India."

I wanted a time-table showing the exact date of each further step forward, so that the inevitable might be accepted and prepared for, both by garrison and Indians. That was not permitted, and the door was left open for obstruction, misunderstanding and charges of bad faith. But if Montagu's liberal declaration is still the policy of H.M. Government, and it would seem to be so—seem indeed to be an urgent part of our business—then there is no hope of making progress with an *all-India* constitution. Indians don't want it at a gift, and they won't have it—none of them: because they are not agreed, not united—racially, religiously or economically. They are more afraid of each other than of the British.

H.M. Government must, however, get out of the saddle, somehow. Three hundred and ninety million people saying "In God's name, go!" is too much. That is why men of such differing political faith as Sir John Wardlaw Milne, Sir George Schuster, Sir Stanley Reed and myself have urged that we should proceed Province by Province, and allow such Provinces to federate after they are free. 'Allow' is the wrong word; when free, they can make their own terms with their neighbours or with Russia or Siam or Britain.

Start now—with Madras, where there are no Sikhs and but few Moslems; with Bombay, where neither Parsee, nor Borah, nor Mahratta, nor Guzerati require communal electorates; with Orissa, all Hindoo. In such cases you will get a number of different Constituent Assemblies anxious to do the job, not fearfully anxious to prevent a revolution. Once one Province takes the plunge, the others will begin to desire even the risks of freedom.

Let each Province start its 'Constituent' whenever it likes. There is no need to hurry them. Make it clear that under any circumstances they can do just as they like about everything after the war, that we do not propose to dictate to Indians ever any more—above all, that the armed forces will be theirs (not ours), directly the Province says "Go". Then get on with the



war—bearing in mind that most Indians will help one side *or* the other. Therefore any assistance we get will 'count two on a division'.

For this reason I hope that long before this appears in print, each Indian Province will have its own Home Guard. For this reason recruiting for the Indian Army should not be limited by the amount of equipment available, nor by lack of British officers. Men capable of leadership, such as young Rajagopalacharia, are to be found as easily in the universities and colleges of India as in England. Because we have no time to spare, such students can put three years' training into three weeks! For the only real training for fighting is fighting. Those who, on acquaintance, do not like further fighting, can be 'returned to store'. This is no time for half-measures.

From 390 million people the supply of man-power is inexhaustible; but they will be valueless without morale and the will to fight. Obviously no Sikh or Moslem, actually no Indian at all, will fight any better for being told that the British are going to clear out. His immediate reaction will be (i) that the British are afraid of the Japanese and (ii) where do I come in—and my family? If I wanted to recruit in India five millions to fight like heroes, I should start a hurricane campaign on the platform and in the Press, led by Mme Chiang Kai-shek, Pandit Nehru for the United Provinces, Jinnah for the Moslem, and somebody else for the Bengali, the Sikhs, Madrasis and Rajputs. The Government might close its ears to what they said; but might enact that every man who fought should receive, dead or alive, a free gift of three irrigated acres before the British left India. In certain quarters that might be unpopular; but it would be just, is possible, and would give the men something to fight for. They would then see exactly where they did 'come in'; and men with arms generally do get what they are promised.

#### JEWIS AND PALESTINE

So much for India and the Colonies. There remains one further section of Hitler's 'subhumans' whose place under reconstruction is yet more important to define and to support. They are the Jews, Hitler's specially damned enemies, fit only for extermination, and now being methodically starved to death.

The dying effort of Lloyd-Georgian liberalism in the last war allocated to the Jews a homeland in Palestine; and Great Britain graciously accepted the mandate in order to carry out the 'Balfour declaration'. Those of us who had worked for and secured this settlement did so not only as an act of justice and to provide a home for the homeless, but also to provide a bridgehead whence civilization and Western culture might permeate the East. The British are bad mixers; the Jews should be the carriers of Occidental life and thought into the sleepy Orient. The new colony should be a credit to British statesmanship, and Palestine our firm fortress in time of trouble.

#### ONE JEWISH SUCCESS

The Jews of all the world have done their part nobly in Palestine. Five hundred thousand of the best intelligence and morality have converted a wilderness into a garden. For the first time in history, colonists from a higher civilization have neither robbed nor exploited nor exterminated the wilder native race. The Aztecs and Incas of Mexico and Peru, the Redskins on the

Great Lakes of North America, the aborigines of Australia and Tasmania, the Hottentots and Kaffirs of South Africa—all have been enslaved, or exploited and gradually exterminated. Wherever settlers have come, they have taken the land by force or fraud under the plea of necessity and expediency. Only the Jews of Palestine have paid for barren lands at a blackmail price and laboured to make such lands productive. Tel Aviv, a hive of industry with 200,000 Jewish inhabitants, stands today where there were but barren sand-dunes twenty-five years ago. Haifa rivals Alexandria and the Piræus; Jerusalem has conquered nature and become a model and beautiful city. The collective farms are as fine in spirit and in economic example as any in Russia. Above all, a despised race from Polish ghettos has become a self-respecting people; former middlemen, beating down and under-cutting their neighbours in a fight for a bare living, have become proud and successful colonists, conquering nature instead of their fellow man. They have performed this miracle in the teeth of the bitterest opposition from the British administration, both in London and in Palestine.

We might have had two million such colonists, spread from Baghdad to the frontiers of Egypt, a living fortress to defend the Suez Canal and the oil-wells of Persia and Mesopotamia. They might now be robustly hitting back at their enemy and ours. Their factories might have been pouring out munitions; their ships might have been making the Mediterranean dangerous to our enemies; 200,000 with the spirit of the Maccabees might have conveyed that spirit to comrades of the United Nations in arms. Instead, they have been hampered at every turn, disarmed and left almost unprotected from the armed Arab looters among whom they dwell. Their immigration has been stopped, their land purchases prohibited, the little money they have saved from Hitler taken from them in taxation, to supply Arabs who murder and a British administration which denies them justice.

#### PALESTINE ADMINISTRATION

This Administration and their abettors in Whitehall claim that all this wrecking is done 'in the interests of the natives'! I have proved a dozen times, and the House of Commons knows, that this is false. 'In the interests of the natives'! Let the natives of Kenya and Rhodesia explain how our modern Colonial Office looks after *their* interests, how *their* land is taken without payment, how they are taxed to work, how they are educated, how their leaders are banished, how they are given a vote or a voice in their government! God forbid that we, or the Jews, should ever look after the interests of Palestine natives as the British Colonial Office looks after the interests of African natives!

Had these settlers in Palestine been British, how proud we should have been of them! How the Administration would have helped them, with loans, advice and arms. How safe they would now be, both from natives and from Hitler! How safe *we* should now be in the Eastern Mediterranean! But they were not British, they were Jews.

However much the Colonial Office Administration may dislike Jews, they might at least have spared the House of Commons the hypocrisy of the last 22 years. All this sabotage of Jewish freedom and of British interests has taken place because crypto-fascism rules in the Near East and lurks in Whitehall. They don't like Jews; won't use Jews; do not accept the Balfour declaration, and are determined to break it. Twenty-five years of ceaseless

struggle against Jews in Palestine has produced in the officials a state of mind which prefers Hitler and Mussolini to that cause for which we fight. They would sooner the Jews drowned in the *Struma* than landed in Palestine; that is the measure of their hate.

#### ARAB REACTIONS

The effect on the Arab natives is obvious. The mob of plunderers and murderers use as their slogan: 'The Government is with us.' They think it; they have reason to think it. They think the Administration hates the settlers as much as they do and for the same reason—that they are Jews. But they do not love or respect us any more for that reason. Jews or English are all the same to the followers of the Mufti. The years of propaganda from Rome and Berlin have seen to that. The dictator countries have amply supplied both the arms and the arguments of hate. *Mein Kampf* can (or could) be bought in Palestine while the Government censor saw to it that criticism of Hitler, Mussolini and Franco should be properly restrained!

The Oriental mind does not understand. It takes appeasement for fear, assent for consent, the desire-to-please for weakness. The last Arab rising against the Jews (which could have been put down in three weeks and lasted 18 months) failed to make us popular while destroying the prestige of our arms. We know now that nothing will induce either the Arab or the Egyptian to fight for us. We know that the first appearance of the Storm Troopers in Palestine will be the signal for an Arab rising—in Palestine as in Mesopotamia. Twenty-five years of abject appeasement and encouragement of Arab intransigence has ended in complete failure.

#### POST-WAR SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINE

If the United Nations win, and if the Jews of Palestine have not been exterminated by Hitler, I know quite well what the Palestine Administration wants. They want an Arab Federation—the two Arabias, Palestine, Syria, Transjordan and 'Irak'—in the fond hope that, if not part of a greater British Federation, it will be pro-British—a sort of Federated Malay States, which can be outlined red on the map and provide employment for British advisers. The Jews, or what is left of them, will be 'tolerated' in the way they have been up to now.

Somehow, I do not think that will come off! America would not like it. The Atlantic Charter hardly envisages such pleasant imperialism. The Conservatives, even, are becoming disillusioned about Arabs and Egyptians. The Army officers are becoming less cocksure. Mr. Churchill may still be in power, and has a way of frightening men of little minds. What I should like would be a larger Palestine (embracing the Hauran, Transjordan and Sinai as a self-governing State of the Democratic Federal Union; such a State to be pledged to open frontiers for immigration; and Jewish police to keep order. Then the Jews would soon be in a majority, and with votes for all and single member constituencies on a general franchise, the State would develop as peacefully and justly as the State of New York. As for the rest, being something of a Turcophile I should gladly see the rest of Syria and Irak reoccupied by the new Turkey—that would at least remove those hideous veils and tarbushes with which we seek to perpetuate in Palestine the obfuscated mysteries of the Middle Ages.

Such a solution would provide a land of refuge for all Jews and solve the Jewish problem. There is no other way of doing so. But that, of course, is no guarantee that it will be done. Even when Hitler is hanged and dead, his spirit will live on in quite a number of people. I commend this solution, however, to America; otherwise America will have to take our place as Mandatory for Palestine—for as Mandatory we have utterly failed, even if we have failed through treachery.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE VALUE OF THE LORDS

*"Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest—that of the whole."*

EDMUND BURKE, M.P., 1774.

THE reader will have realized my dislike of the Corporative State, and, even if the trains do still run to time, I am not roused to enthusiasm for Mussolini. But those in this land who have known the 'divine exhalation' from the Pontine Marshes seem to turn inevitably to the reform of the British House of Lords.

### REFORM OF THE LORDS

According to these people, it is in our reformed House of Lords that every Corporation shall find its avatar. There the interests shall lie down together in amity, and perform in secret conclave those mystic rites of log-rolling which shall satisfy everybody round the table—at the expense of those under it. Replete with prancing pro-Consuls, magnates of the City, the Heads of the Professions and Services, and salted with suitable Labour leaders of the right convictions or commitments, a powerful House could be devised that should command respect and might secure obedience.

So they dream, only to meet with the dull conservative resistance of the stupid British echoing down the centuries: '*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*'.<sup>1</sup> "It is impossible to survive and progress with so absurd a veto as the present House of Lords," cry the 'For-God's-sakers'. Answer: "*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*." "It is laughable that the hereditary principle, etc., etc.!" "*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*" comes the anaphora down the ages. Nevertheless, the bright young things see in this cherished absurdity the possibility of 'higher things', the germ of the Fascist State—and write authentic articles in the silly season to display a nice new House of Lords fit for Mussolini.

The most sporting scheme was the step-by-step abolition of the hereditary Peerage. Each generation was to go back one, unless they could produce a Boy-Scout good deed to save the dignity of the next generation.

<sup>1</sup> 'We will not change the laws of England'. In these words, 650 years ago, the Lords signified their refusal to legitimize an eldest son born before wedlock. As heiresses were the best gambling counter of the time, their resolution to refuse the Church's decree was not entirely disinterested.

Our dukes would sink, gasping, into marquesses, our earls to viscounts, our bold barons would be blotted out in scores to mingle with ignoble baronets.

Then there is the proposal that future peerages should be for life only. This, it is contended, would enable stout radicals, and even Labour men, to accept the position just like aldermen in the London County Council without compromising their natural contempt for heredity, snobbery and rank. It is a kindly gesture made to Labour, to the honest working man, whose wife would be made so uncomfortable by thinking of her daughter-in-law becoming in time a real lady. Alas for human nature! You might go through the House of Commons offering life peerages on a plate to all—to the humblest Tory as well as to the Trade Union dictator—without finding one who would pick it up. Their reasons they would give as financial—Peers are not paid expenses. But their real refusal and contempt would be for a pinchbeck peerage for paupers from the proletariat, whose sons and daughters would get no 'kick' out of it at all.

Or, consider the Scottish Peer system. All the Scottish Peers elect sixteen of themselves to sit in the House of Lords for each Parliament. Therefore turn all the present 700 Peers of the United Kingdom into an electoral body to elect 70, who shall represent them in the Lords. All Parties would share in proper measure in the new refined assembly, as the selection would be by proportional representation. Thus backwoodsmen would vanish, and the country would be spared the scandal of a speech being made in their Lordships' House by the present Earl Russell or Duke of Bedford—to name the only two who would not bring a libel action.

The constant prayer of politicians is, "May the Lord deliver us from our constituents!" If, going to the Upper House, one is still dependent on the same caucus and subject to the same humiliations, if we are still to mind our p's and q's lest we be reprimanded by the Party Whip, or even expelled from the Party like Stafford Cripps and Aneurin Bevan and D. N. Pritt, what is the inducement to sit in the impotent Lords? What sort of honest personal opinion do you expect from people elected by the Party machine? In the Commons nobody minds—everybody, indeed, expects—the obscure Member to make, once in a while, a tub-thumping oration for the benefit of his constituency, to show that he is alive. We can walk out; and he can tell them next Sunday in Little Puddleton how he gave it straight from the shoulder, and what the Prime Minister said to him about it afterwards. Are all the 70 elected Peers going to show off to their select critical electorate that they are alive—more alive than the other fellow? It is indecent that the old gentlemen of 70 should keep popping up to speak to show that they are alive. That is why I left the Commons, with gratitude to Churchill, and the remains of my dignity. For heaven's sake, let us at the end, after we have acquired experience and merit, be at last able to speak with freedom and to expect from our fellows completely honest counsel and advice, untinged by Party propaganda, unchastened by expediency.

I pass over the various plans 'to strengthen' the Lords by the collection therein of all ex-Cabinet Ministers, all ex-Governors, ex-Permanent Officials of superior grade, heads of the professions or confessions, victorious Generals and Admirals, and all the other component extracts from the Corporative State. The public is now (and should, I hope, remain) somewhat sceptical as to the strength such folk would add to any executive or

deliberative body. I would sooner pick them by lot out of the street as in G. K. Chesterton's *Napoleon of Notting Hill*. Seeking to justify and make excuses for your past blinds the eyes and seals the brain. How can such men, hampered by their past, bring an impartial mind to bear on any problem of action or philosophic discussion?

Lord Vansittart justifying the kicking of Weimar, Chamberlain justifying appeasement, Trenchard justifying the separation of the Air Force, Chatfield justifying monster battleships, Jellicoe justifying Jutland, or Ironside Dunkirk—how very tiresome! Most of them have the sense not to try it; those who do, show perhaps a twinge of conscience which is all to the good, but their past indicates no reason to anticipate prospective reliability, whether in action or in philosophy.

#### MORAL INFLUENCE

As a High Court of Appeal in all legal matters, the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary need no strengthening. The moral influence of the House of Lords upon politics is quite another matter. All this 'strengthening business' misconceives what has gradually become both the virtue and the province of the House of Lords. We do not want a Corporative Chamber; we do not want a duplicate of the active ruling House of Commons. We do not need a mausoleum for extinct virility or for the rehash of old controversies. I do not think we even require action from the House of Lords. I should prefer the House to remain indifferent to the perpetual wail of the 'For-God's-sakers' to 'do something'.

No! I conceive that the House of Lords as now in existence, being a voluntary association of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, responsible to no man but only to their God and their country's good name, has great value as a political court of equity, humanity, or morals. That it is a high court without power to execute its orders does but add to the moral influence upon public opinion of its praise or of its censure. Indeed, the more it is above the Party battle, the greater will be the respect in which it is held, and the weight of its verdicts.

It is no answer to say that it has not yet been much used in this sense. The House is in a state of transition in an age of very rapid change to new ideas and new standards, which require constant reference back to the first principles upon which our British character has been founded and developed. There are political ethics as well as Christian ethics blended in what has made our national life. We desire to preserve them, or rather to see that modifications due to changing circumstances do not become the sport of expediency. It is to expediency alone that popular opinion, the Press, and even the representative House of Commons too often give ear. The Golden Rule, freedom, justice, the humanities, the lessons of history and of the philosophers, need recalling and restating, *ex cathedra*, but without power save over the minds of men.

#### CHURCH LEADERSHIP

A revolution has taken place during the last hundred years in the Church of England. Leaders of the Church no longer think, preach and vote of or for the interests or privileges of their Church. They now recognize that

the moral and humanitarian standards of the country are increasingly in their charge and are their first business. Of our Church, Clemenceau's bitter jibe is no longer true: 'Christianity, which began by being the refuge of the poor, has ended by becoming the Trades Union of the rich!' An Archbishop of York, daring unpopularity, can demand justice and denounce vengeance. Bishops of Chichester and of Chelmsford can stand up for alien Jews; Deans of Canterbury and of Chichester can sacrifice preferment and career in pursuit of what they believe to be right. I may have no faith, save in freedom; but there is much in common between all faiths which demand courage and self-sacrifice—too much for anyone, loving his country, to fail to applaud the entry of the Church of England into political ethics, or her guardianship of all our Non-conformist consciences.

There are 24 Bishops of the Church of England sitting in the House of Lords. We could do with more of them, and with any other Heads of Churches from Great Britain and Northern Ireland. At present they attend and speak too rarely. There is a reluctance to intervene save on matters in which the Church is obviously and directly interested. In truth, there are no matters in which the Church should not be interested. Every issue—from the land question to child labour or peace terms—has a moral side. They plead episcopal duties, and I admit that in the present inconvenience of getting about attendance is a difficulty. But I believe they are merely nervous from inexperience of plunging with a banner into the world of men. The new Archbishop may enjoy both the banner and the opportunity of extended service.

#### WHAT IS NOW IN EXISTENCE ?

I have spoken of the House of Lords, as now in existence, as being a voluntary association of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, as having this possibility of guiding political, moral and even economic ethics. As now in existence? Nominally, there is a House of Lords which might run to 769 Members, most of whom should sit in the House by hereditary right. In fact, it is extremely rare for even 100 to take part in a whipped division, and a House of forty to listen to debate is a good House. If one should analyse those who attend and occasionally speak, it becomes obvious at once that, apart from the bishops, the Peers who attend are almost all either those who have been raised to the peerage, who have sat in the Commons, or are Ministers or ex-Ministers of the Crown. Seven hundred peers would only feel uncomfortable and strangers if they came to do more than take their seats and register a very infrequent vote.

So that the actual House of Lords—the existing active House—is a cross between a Committee of Privy Councillors and a bench of Aldermen from the Church and the Commons, irremovable and therefore less infected with Party spirit, and much more given, even than the Commons, to an altruistic point of view. I see no reason to alter it; I desire no power for it; but I do see great possibilities for its moral influence. As Democracy is government by reason and argument, the right to question the bureaucracy and freely to debate any question, seems a useful buttress for both reason and democracy.

The use made of the whole peerage by Mr. Balfour between 1906 and 1914, to vote down Liberal legislation, or—a right they still possess but dare not use—to vote down and hold up for two years Labour legislation—is



dangerous only to the House itself. It is unlikely to be used again; such are the overwhelming powers of the Commons House.

Except for this doubtfully existing danger, I entirely approve of the existing Second Chamber, and infinitely prefer it to any elected Second Chamber either on the lines of the American Senate or indirectly elected by the County, City and County Borough Councils. Such Chambers would reduce the prestige and standing of the Members of the Lower House, and completely upset the balanced constitution and institutions which wisdom and luck have developed for the education and government of Great Britain. Moreover, a second Chamber indirectly elected from Councils would surely compel elections to all such Councils to be run on Party lines. Fortunately a certain amount of independence of Party still persists on local Councils.

#### 'MEND IT OR END IT'

Only a generation ago denunciation of the House of Lords was a common theme for the radical politician. The hereditary Chamber was indefensible save by obfuscated Tories. The derision of Labouchère, the Non-conformist ardour of Bright and Joseph Chamberlain, and the republican fervour of Dilke and Morley, still lingered in the memory. Political feeling ran high in those days. The House of Lords was a high Tory shrine, and Gladstone, hewing down trees, had laid his axe to the trunk of privilege and vested interests. The only alternatives were 'mend it or end it'. For a radical to retire from the fight and enter the Lords was almost apostasy.

But with the passing of the Lords' veto, and the first world war—and the eclipse of the Liberal Party, all changed. The Lords were no longer a bulwark, because it was no longer safe to use them. The backwoodsmen were better kept out of sight in the background; one after another, and in rapid succession, plans were brought forward for changing the composition of the House. These were brought forward not by radicals but by the Tory Party. Under all such schemes hereditary right was to be sacrificed in exchange for more solid blocking powers. Little wonder was it that the 'backwoodsmen' sulked and began to stay away. They argued thus: If the high and mighty intellectual Peers thought the backwoods were insufficiently educated or out of date, let them get on with the job themselves. The 'mend-them' Bill never got beyond pious Resolutions, but those to be sacrificed took the hint in dudgeon and became strangers to their own House. They washed their hands of politics. Meanwhile the radicals of the Labour Party became ever more anxious to prevent any amendment of the second Chamber which should set it up as a rival to the House of Commons; and single-Chamber men ceased to find any support in the Press, on the platform or in the Labour Executive.

I do not think they ever put it into words, but the Labour Governments preferred to be dependent on the Liberal vote in the Commons. They preferred it as a good excuse for not being forced by their wild men to carry out an extreme policy, to which they might have given lip-service in their opposition days. Just before the 1923 election, I remember saying to MacDonald: "I know what the result will be. We shall come back the second largest party; but with the Liberals we shall have a majority. I know Baldwin will resign rather than carry on in such a position, he will advise the King to send for you." MacDonald turned to me and said: "You really

think so? That would be just perfect." Office, without power to be dangerous, is the goal which all so situated must find perfect. In like manner they regard the House of Lords. It has become 'my partner Jorkins', never in evidence, but always the stumbling-block to carrying out inconvenient promises, the politically-needed whipping-boy for Ministerial failure.

So the House of Lords will endure unamended, unless some future leader of the Labour Party agrees to restore the veto in order to make 'my partner Jorkins' a more real person. But I hope the inconvenience of coming up to town from the backwoods will endure, till habit develops into custom, and custom into constitutional practice.

#### HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

The first use of the term 'House of Commons' occurs in 1454,<sup>1</sup> the term 'House of Lords' not till a hundred years later; for to mediaeval England the House of Lords was Parliament. The King in Parliament was the King on his throne, sitting in his High Court of Parliament—the supreme Court of Appeal and fount of Justice. Before Commons were thought of, before knights of the shire and burgesses were brought in by Simon de Montfort, the King in Parliament, surrounded by Judges, Bishops and Magnates, judged England, granted his Charters, and pronounced his Statutes. Parliament was the King's Council and *Curia Regis*—the most essential elements whereof, after the King, were the King's servants and the Judges of the Bench.

The advent of the Commons, called occasionally to the presence, outside the bar of the real House of Parliament, began almost unnoticed by the great machinery of the Court. But the Councillors, summoned to assist the King in his Court, became, early in the reign of King Edward I, a nebulous number of territorial magnates, the feudal baronage. By the time of the Lord Ordainers (1312) the summoning of the heads of some seventy families had become constitutional practice. Before the end of that century, by their 'high looks', their pride and power, they had frozen the Judges and other King's servants into silence. The Judges received the same writs of summons, but, by custom, spoke only in Parliament when their opinion was asked. The High Court of Parliament eliminated Judges and King's servants and became in fact the House of Lords. Later they eliminated the Abbots also, and limited the number of Bishops who might attend their House.

The lay Peers summoned had sunk to 34 by the end of the Wars of the Roses. Henry VIII increased their number to give his lay Peers a majority over Bishops and Abbots before he subdued the Spiritual Lords to his service; and after the inglorious time of the Stuarts, the great Whig Houses entrenched in the Lords controlled also the Commons, and the Crown as well. George III broke the power of the great Whig Houses even before the French Revolution converted them to Tories, and under Victoria pèrages sprang up like mushrooms, and the Lords became the House of Plutocracy.

After these many metamorphoses there seems no constitutional obstacle to prevent the House of Lords becoming the decorative setting for leaders of thought, ethics and politics. There, on common ground, could meet and reason together, with advantage to the world and to each other, lovers of wisdom and the humanities with wide experience of the world of men.

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The name not of the building but of the body.—*Paston Letters*, i-273.

## CRITICAL VALUE

Nor need they be divorced from direct contact with affairs. As the elector becomes more and more dependent on the State, so a Member of the House of Commons—still in active life—becomes dependent upon the bureaucrat. This blunts to some extent the desire to criticize. It is no longer only the P.P.S. that constitutes himself as laudator and protector of his Minister and his Department. Therefore the more reason for vigilance in the Lords by those who have no longer any axe to grind or career to cultivate. Moreover, as they have no constituents with personal grievances to be amended, the elder statesmen can and do take up wider issues.

They can put down Questions to Ministers as in the Commons, but the answer is not followed by a hot rapid exchange of rapier-thrusts to the accompaniment of cheers and laughter, befogging the point at issue. The Lords' Questions are few and may well be followed by a full debate averaging two hours. Those who explain on behalf of Government and the Departments in the Lords are generally Under-Secretaries without much authority or independence. But that drawback is small compared with the advantage of being able (in the form of a single question) to explain fully the point of the question, and to get the assistance of other Peers unconnected with Party who may reinforce one's arguments.

One must remember that bureaucrats dislike above all public criticism which puts them wrong with their chiefs. In devising an answer to a Question on the Paper, the official can conceal much without departing from the literal truth. That is not so easy in drafting a speech in answer to a spoken question. In such a case the Minister, even an Under-Secretary, has to be told all the story by his officials, selection being left to him. If the story is a bad one to tell and hear, the Minister will see the questioner, ask him to withdraw the question and tell him enough of what he is going to do in order to put the matter right. He will tell him enough to persuade, but his promises of performance will allow considerable latitude of definition. The motion will probably have to be withdrawn, but the great thing is to have witnesses and allies at the subsequent interview to buttress the virtue of the Minister. A show of firmness will also induce the Minister to have the responsible officer present. That will avoid all misunderstandings, and produce more widespread devastation in the Department. The one-sided tale becomes impossible.

I have laid great stress upon the power to criticize the bureaucracy and the growing importance of such criticism for democracy's survival. In other directions the power of the Peers is less than that of the Commons. Important Bills generally start in the Commons and are thoroughly discussed there before they come before the Lords; the subject is exhausted, the Press no longer interested, unless it is a Party last-ditch fight. The House meets only two or three times a week and then only for three or four hours. There is no Question hour and bubbling Prime Minister. Even Lord Cranborne, as 'leader', is an inadequate substitute for a whole row of gentlemen recognizable from David Low's cartoons. The whole House of Lords, now meeting in a modest room, is more a family gathering than a battleground of giants. Yet the Press, with laudable appreciation of high rank, give speakers in the family party at least as much publicity as they do to the gladiators in another place. They even allege that Lords are better worth reporting, adding, slyly,

that their readers like it. Readers are no doubt the best judges of the educational value of our spoken commentary from the Lords.

#### EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Second only to the value of our criticism of the Departments I put the educational value of fresh ideas from new angles, coming from well-known men above suspicion of deceit by reason of their position of perfect freedom.

We are much more free to speak our mind in the House of Lords ; for we have arrived. We are more free from Party pressure, passion, exaggeration, colouring—than when we were in the Commons ; for we cannot lose our seat. Because we are free, our arguments, our criticism, and our exhortations can be taken on their merits. As we do not speak to Party-deafened but to receptive ears, the educational value of the House of Lords is, potentially, far greater than can be that of the House of Commons. It must surprise the philosopher that the Church at least has not made more use of this platform for just that education in self-control, high thinking, and clean honesty which is the special need of these revealing days.

In the Lords, as in the Commons, there are all the minor chores to be done outside the Chamber. There are Private Bill Committees ; if Standing Committee work vanishes, there are more official calls to serve on Committees with the Commons ; there are the 'Society' Committees (by which I mean Societies for this and that) ; there are innumerable demands from near and far to speak, take the chair, write a foreword, send a message, and subterfuges to extract an autograph. In the interests of all my fellow victims, as well as my own purse, I solemnly and publicly record that never again will I answer such requests, however highly sponsored, unless accompanied by a stamped and addressed postcard or envelope. In future even the most shocking cases of injustice to helpless refugees must go unanswered, so heavy becomes the burden upon the good-natured Peer.

#### GOOD-NATURED PEERS

For those Peers who attend are essentially good-natured. Why else should they attend ? or speak ? or ask questions ? They are not doing the job as chairman or director of a company, for there are no fees or travelling expenses. They come partly as to a club to meet their friends, partly from a sense of public duty ; partly, no doubt, to defend themselves from some imputation, personal or professional, but far more often to defend others. When Lord Gainford, once a soulless Party Whip, takes the trouble at 82 to protest against the employment of young persons 53 hours a week, he is completely disinterested. So is the Bishop of Chichester speaking for Jewish refugees ; so is Lord Sankey on coal-mining, or Lord Cecil on the distinction between Nazis and the German people.

At present they appeal, verbally indeed, to the Government *via* an Under-Secretary without power, but actually to public opinion. I am not certain that this is inevitable. When debates go, as frequently, all one way, save for the official stone-wall, it should be easy to press the matter further by private deputation to the Cabinet Minister concerned. Thereby the public interest would be better served. There is a sense of wasted effort when a sound case is stated by sound men and nothing happens. In the Commons

one is in more constant contact with the Executive. Politics there is more a whole-time job. Deputations to Ministers are all in the day's work, and some Members are always available. Peers, on the other hand, carry far more weight with Ministers than most M.P.s voicing the views of electors—just as personal knowledge carries more weight than a second-hand interest.

Certainly I find far better debating and more practical knowledge in the Lords than in the Commons. It is not a drawback that in a tamer atmosphere speaking tends to become less explosive and more scholarly. I do not agree with Lord Vansittart's vendetta against the German people, but how neatly he put the point I have always wished to make: "I think it was Hume who said that 'incapacity for astonishment indicates a feeble mind'. And if he did not say it, I do! And I hope your lordships will agree that is the proper manly way to treat quotations." Quite so! This taking cover behind authority denies one's own intelligence and belittles one's own authority. I am interested in what Mr. Gladstone said in 1867, but I am capable of judging for myself whether he was right. When Lord Simon quotes Milton to justify threats to the Press, I protest that much has happened in the last 300 years to educate even the wisest of those days. It is a poor case that needs buttressing with authorities, and the quotations prefixed to these chapters are merely a concession to the weak and an advertisement of *Forever Freedom*!

The leader of the House accused me the other day of "inciting to violence". I admit it. In a sense my whole life has been an incitement to think, to see, and then to act. Every idea is an incitement. It offers itself for belief, and, if believed, it is acted on, unless some other belief outweighs it, or failure of energy stifles it at birth. The only difference between the expression of opinion and an incitement is the speaker's enthusiasm for the result. If I have any criticism to make of the House of Lords (to which I am proud to belong), it is that their Lordships are just too content merely to express an opinion.

Not so is our spirit of justice and humanity, our tradition of freedom, our education, our civilization, our worship to be defended. Liberty is the crusade of all brave and conscientious men, the new religion, the chivalry of all gentlemen. For that crusade this testament is written.

Let our light so shine before men, that our democracy and our Parliament may continue the more fruitfully to guide all mankind towards the brighter, burning, consuming flame of liberty and justice.

THE END

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